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CHASING A SLAVER, OFF THE AFRICAN COAST.

From a photograph, in the possession of Mr. Edward Trenchard, of the painting by Melbye.

THE HISTORY OF OUR NAVY

FROM ITS ORIGIN TO THE
END OF THE WAR WITH SPAIN

1775-1898

BY

JOHN R. SPEARS

AUTHOR OF "THE PORT OF MISSING SHIPS," "THE GOLD DIGGINGS OF CAPE HORN," ETC.

WITH MORE THAN FIVE HUNDRED ILLUSTRATIONS
MAPS AND DIAGRAMS

IN FIVE VOLUMES

VOLUME III.

NEW YORK
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1902

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TO ALL WHO WOULD SEEK PEACE
AND PURSUE IT

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THE HISTORY OF OUR NAVY

CHAPTER I

WHEN PORTER SWEPT THE PACIFIC

THE STORY OF THE SECOND CRUISE OF THE FAMOUS LITTLE FRIGATE *ESSEX*—AROUND CAPE HORN AND ALONE IN THE BROAD SOUTH SEA—CAPTURE OF A PERUVIAN PICAROON—DISGUISING THE *ESSEX*—THE BRITISH WHALING FLEET TAKEN BY SURPRISE—AN ARMED WHALER TRANSFORMED INTO A YANKEE CRUISER—THE SAILORMAN'S PARADISE AMONG THE NUKAHIVA GROUP—WHEN FARRAGUT WAS A MIDSHIPMAN—AN INCIPIENT MUTINY AMONG THE SAILORS WHO WANTED TO REMAIN AMONG THE ISLANDS—FARRAGUT AS A CAPTAIN AT TWELVE.

Of great renown in the annals of the American Navy is the name of Porter, for the deeds of Captain David Porter with the little frigate *Essex* fill a large space in the story of the War of 1812; while those of David D. Porter, the son of Captain David Porter, during the Civil War, of which the story will be told farther on, raised him to the highest rank.

The second cruise of the *Essex* began on October 28, 1812, when she sailed from the

Delaware bound across the ocean to Port Praya, Cape de Verde, to meet the *Constitution* and the *Hornet* and join in a cruise against British commerce in the far East. Her luck in winds having made the passage longer than anticipated, she arrived after the *Constitution* and *Hornet* had sailed for Brazil. Having replenished his stores at Port Praya, Captain Porter stood away toward the coast of Africa from Port Praya in order to deceive the people as to his destination, and then ran away toward the island of Fernando de Noronha, where he expected once more to meet his consorts. This passage was without event until December 11, 1812, when at 2 o'clock in the afternoon a sail was seen to windward. Thereat the British signals captured from the *Alert* in the first cruise were displayed, but they failed to bring the stranger, which was soon seen to be a large brig, toward the *Essex*. So Porter stood up toward the brig, and by nightfall was near enough to see that she was flying British colors; and a little later she displayed night-signals. When Porter was seen to be unable to answer these, the crew of the brig crowded on all sail and manœuvred with skill to escape, but at 9 o'clock at night the *Essex* was alongside, and after a volley of musketry from the Yankee, the brig struck. She proved to be the British packet, *Nocton*, of ten guns and thirty-one men.

Her cargo included $55,000 in coin. The coin was taken out and the brig sent toward home under a prize-crew of seventeen men, but she was recaptured by the swift-sailing *Belvidera* when near Bermuda.

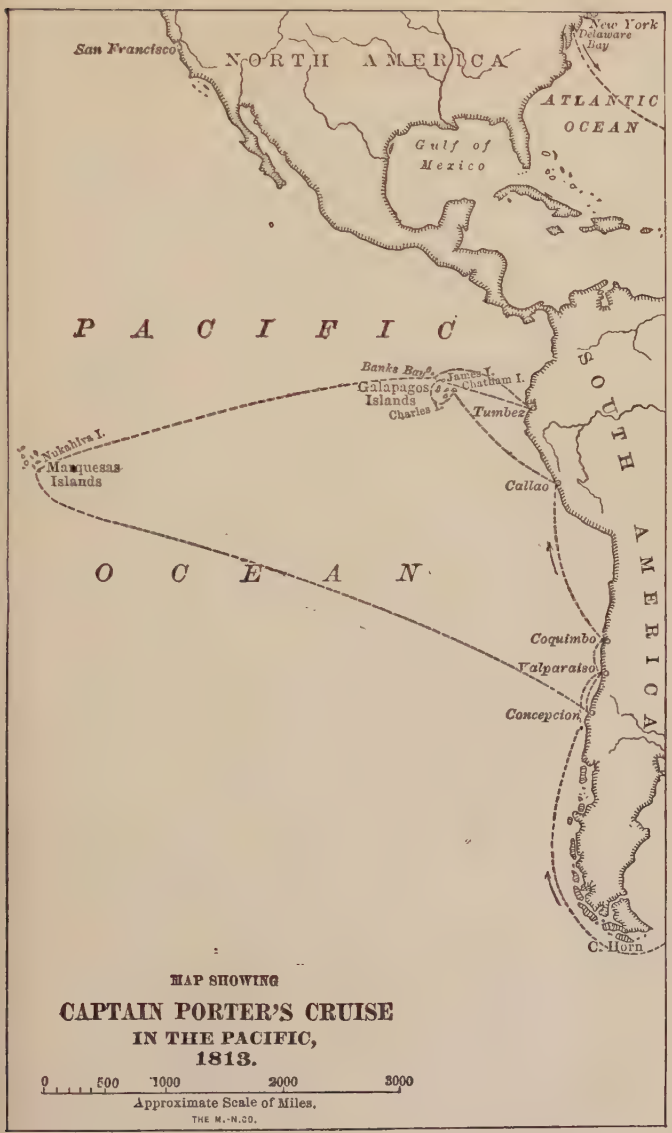
The *Essex* reached Fernando de Noronha on December 14th, and there found a letter from Commodore Bainbridge. As this port was frequented by British men-of-war this letter was signed with the name of the captain of a British ship, the *Acasta*—Bainbridge having caused the Brazilian authorities of the island to believe that the *Constitution* and the *Hornet* were the *Acasta* and the *Morgiana*—and directed Porter to pose as Sir James Yeo, of the *Southampton*, on reaching the island. Because of this diplomacy — because Porter took a letter which Bainbridge had written to him under the name of Sir James Yeo—British writers have said he was guilty of conduct unbecoming to a gentleman and officer!

The letter was double; there was one letter in common ink that meant very little, and on the back of this was another in lime-juice that directed Porter to meet the *Constitution* and *Hornet* off Cape Frio.

To Cape Frio, a lofty and most picturesque point on the Brazilian coast, went Porter, and there he lay under short sail, filling and backing, on the day when Bainbridge, with the *Con-*

stitution, won the memorable victory over the British frigate *Java*. He remained cruising off the Brazilian coast for several days, capturing the British schooner *Elizabeth* meantime, and eventually put into St. Catharine's, where he learned what had happened off Bahia, including the fact that the British ship-of-the-line *Montagu* had driven the *Hornet* off to the north.

So Porter was left free to choose his own course. It was characteristic of the man that he should have decided, in spite of the fact that the Spaniards, who controlled the west coast of South America, were practically allies of Great Britain, that he would round the Horn and destroy the British shipping in the southern Pacific. He could not hope for a really friendly reception in any port there, but he was confident that he could live off the enemy. Sailing from St. Catharine's on January 26, 1813, he found an enemy on board his ship next day which we, in this era of the medical science, can scarcely appreciate. A form of dysentery appeared among the crew that was apparently contagious, or was, at least, caused by conditions that threatened the whole crew. It was especially dangerous from the fact that he was bound around the Horn, where the weather would compel the closing of ports, hatches, and companion-ways, and so prevent ventilating the ship. But the commonsense



MAP SHOWING

CAPTAIN PORTER'S CRUISE

IN THE PACIFIC,

1813.

0 500 1000 2000 3000

Approximate Scale of Miles.

THE M.-N.CO.

of the captain served where the knowledge of medicine failed, for he adopted what would now be called rigorous sanitary measures; he kept the ship and crew absolutely clean and so stopped the epidemic and preserved the health of the crew in a way unheard of in those days of scurvy and ship fever.

The ship made the Horn in February, the end of the southern summer season—the season of the fiercest gales in that region. The weather became frightful. The seas broke over the little frigate continually, gun-deck ports were broken in fore and aft, extra spars were swept overboard, and boats were knocked to pieces at the davits by the waves. At one time the boatswain was so terrified by the assaults of the sea that he shouted:

"The ship's side is stove in. We are sinking!" and for a brief time there was a panic among some of the crew.

"This was the only instance in which I ever saw a regular good seaman paralyzed by fear of the perils of the sea," wrote Midshipman Farragut.

However, early in March the *Essex* anchored at Mocha Island, where an abundance of hogs and horses were found running wild. The crew had a good time hunting both, and a large quantity of the meat of each was salted down for future use. From here the *Essex* sailed to

Valparaiso, where it was learned that Chili had declared herself free of Spain.

Sailing from Valparaiso on March 20, 1813, Porter fell in with the American whaler *Charles*, of Nantucket, and learned that a Spanish ship of the coast had captured the American whalers *Walker* and *Barclay* off Coquimbo, only two days before.

At this, Porter headed for the scene of the trouble, and the next morning (March 26th) saw a sail.

"Immediately, from her appearance and the description I had received of her, I knew her to be one of the picaroons that had been for a long time harassing our commerce," wrote Porter in his journal. So he hoisted British colors and sailed up beside the stranger and learned that she was the Peruvian cruiser *Nereyda*, of fifteen guns. Her commander being deceived by the British flag, boasted of having captured the two Yankee whalers. Then Porter got from him a list of the British ships in those waters, with a description of each, so far as the Peruvian could remember. This done, Porter disclosed the character of the *Essex* to the astonished Peruvian, threw overboard all the guns and arms of his corsairs, and wrote a letter to the Viceroy of Peru telling why this was done, after which the *Nereyda* was allowed to go.

Porter's next work was in "disguising our ship, which was done by painting in such a manner as to conceal her real force and exhibit in its stead the appearance of painted guns, etc.; also by giving her the appearance of having a poop, and otherwise so altering her as to make her look like a Spanish merchant-vessel."

The sailormen were still at this work when a sail was seen that, when captured, proved to be the British whaler *Barclay*. With this vessel in company the *Essex* sailed to the Galapagos group, where, on April 29th, the British whaler *Montezuma*, with 1,400 barrels of whale oil on board, was taken. On the same day the whalers *Georgiana* and *Policy* were overhauled. The wind having failed, Porter got out his boats to attack these two vessels. When the boats drew near the *Georgiana* her crew gave three cheers at the sight of the American flag and one of them shouted, "We are all Americans." And that was very near the truth, for she was a British whaler, licensed as a letter of marque, and had a pressed crew of whom the majority were Americans. The *Policy* surrendered also without a fight. As the *Georgiana* was pierced for eighteen guns, and was a smart sailer, Porter transferred the ten guns carried by the *Policy* to her, which, with the six she already had on board, made her quite a respectable cruiser. She was manned by forty-one men under Lieu-

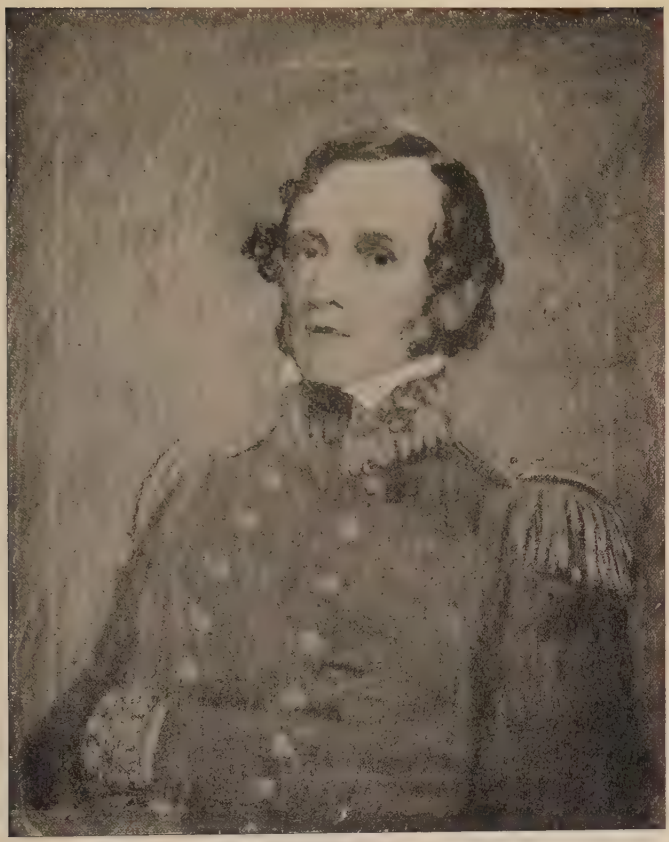
tenant Downes. It was estimated that the three ships taken, with their cargoes, were worth $500,000; but their real value to Porter was in the fact that they carried an abundance of spare canvas, cordage, etc., so that he was able to fit out the *Essex* with new sails, running gear, and standing rigging wherever needed, and provide liberally for future needs.

On May 28th another sail was seen, but as night came on she was lost to view. Next morning, however, she was sighted from the *Montezuma*, and after a long chase was taken by the *Essex*. This prize was the letter-of-marque whaler *Atlantic*, mounting eight eighteen-pounders, and reputed as the fastest ship in those waters. She was commanded by a man named Weir, "who had the pusillanimity to say that 'though he was an American-born he was an Englishman at heart,'" so wrote Midshipman Farragut.

That same evening another vessel was seen, and late at night she was captured also. She proved to be the letter-of-marque whaler *Greenwich*, a ship that had sailed from England under convoy of the ill-fated *Java*. She was full of ship-stores and provisions of every kind, and had on board, moreover, one hundred tons of water and eight hundred large tortoises, sufficient to furnish all the ships with fresh provisions for a month.

"The little squadron now consisted of the *Essex*, forty-six guns and two hundred and forty-five men; the *Georgiana*, sixteen guns and forty-two men; the *Greenwich*, ten guns and fourteen men; the *Atlantic*, six guns and twelve men; the *Montezuma*, two guns and ten men; the *Policy* and the *Barclay* of ten and seven men, respectively; in all, seven ships carrying eighty guns and three hundred and forty men." The prisoners numbered eighty. As the number of prizes as well as prisoners proved burdensome, Captain Porter sailed on June 8th for the mainland, and reached Guayaquil Bay on the 19th. Here some provisions were obtained, and while lying here the *Georgiana*, with her crew of forty men, was sent on a cruise under Lieutenant Downes. The character of Downes was well illustrated on this cruise. Near James Island two British ships were found and secured without a fight. They were the *Catherine*, of eight guns and twenty-nine men, and the *Rose*, of eight guns and twenty-one men. Securing his fifty prisoners on the *Georgiana*, Downes sent ten of his men to each craft taken, and sailed on. That same night another ship was overhauled, and her captain, instead of surrendering when called on to do so, ordered his guns cleared for action.

Downes had but twenty men with which to handle his ship, work his guns, and guard his



John Downes.

From an oil-painting at the Naval Academy, Annapolis.

prisoners, but he promptly opened fire, and after the fifth broadside the enemy surrendered. She proved to be the British letter-of-marque *Hector*, of eleven guns and twenty-five men. She had lost in the fight her maintopmast and most of her standing and running rigging, and two

of her crew were killed and six dangerously wounded.

On manning the *Hector* with ten men Downes had but ten left with which to guard more than seventy prisoners, care for the wounded, and work the ship. In this emergency he threw overboard the guns of the *Rose*, destroyed most of her cargo, and made a cartel of her to which to send the prisoners. Then he returned to Guayaquil Bay, from which the *Rose* sailed for St. Helena.

At Guayaquil a part of the armament and crew of the *Georgiana* were transferred to the larger and swifter *Atlantic*, which was rechristened *Essex Junior*, and the latter was ordered to convoy a part of the fleet of prizes to Valparaiso.

It is worth telling, because of the fame he afterward earned, that Midshipman Farragut was placed on the *Barclay* as prize-master—was made the captain of the ship. Her original captain had agreed to act as navigator, but he was greatly angered, for some reason, at the order to go to Valparaiso, and when outside he backed the maintopsail and refused to fill away and follow the *Essex Junior*, declaring "that he would shoot any man who dared to touch a rope without his orders." Then he went below to get his pistols.

He afterward said he did it merely to scare

the lad, but if that were so he failed, for Farragut called an able American seaman, and told him to have the main-sails filled away. This was done, and then Farragut told the obdurate captain "not to come on deck unless he wished to be thrown overboard," and the captain remained below until Farragut made a report of the affair to Lieutenant Downes, of the *Essex Junior*, and the Britisher agreed to submit quietly to Farragut as captain. Farragut was at this time but twelve years old. Not many boys of twelve would be fit for such a responsible position at that age, and fewer still have had opportunity to show their metal.

The *Greenwich* was made a store-ship, and the *Essex*, with her and the *Georgiana* as consorts, sailed on another cruise, leaving Guayaquil on July 9, 1813. On July 13th, when off Banks Bay, three ships were seen. They separated as soon as the Americans were sighted, whereupon the *Essex* went in chase, leaving the *Georgiana* and *Greenwich* behind. Seeing this, one of the strangers came about and stood for the *Greenwich.* At that the *Greenwich* backed her main-yard, brought a number of men from the *Georgiana* on board, and sailed boldly to meet the stranger.

While these two were approaching each other the *Essex* overhauled the vessel she was pursuing, and found it was the British whaler *Charl-*

ton of ten guns and twenty-one men. Her captain informed Porter that the stranger approaching the *Greenwich* was the *Seringapatam*, a ship of 357 tons, carrying fourteen guns and forty men. She not only outweighed the metal of the *Greenwich*, but had a larger crew, and was the most dangerous ship in those waters. Nevertheless Porter saw serenely the two ships engage in battle, nor was his confidence in his officers and men misplaced, for, after a brief conflict, the *Seringapatam* hauled down her flag. A little later, however, she suddenly made sail and strove to escape. The *Greenwich* at once opened fire on her and kept it up until the British flag was lowered again. It is likely, however, that the *Seringapatam* would have escaped but for the rapid approach of the *Essex*, for she could outsail the *Greenwich*.

Meantime the third ship, the *New Zealander*, of eight guns and twenty-three men, was taken by the *Essex*. On overhauling the papers of the *Seringapatam* it appeared that, although she had no commission either as privateer or letter of marque, she had captured one American whaler, trusting to have the capture legalized by a commission she was expecting to arrive. As his act was really one of piracy the captain was sent to the United States for trial, but he was not convicted.

The other prisoners were put on the *Charlton* and sent under parole to Rio Janeiro. The guns of the *New Zealander* were transferred to the *Seringapatam*, giving her a battery of twenty-two, though this was of no great use, save for one broadside, for the reason that she had only men enough to work her sails. Then the *Georgiana* was loaded with a full cargo of oil, manned with such of the crew of the *Essex* as had served their full time and also wished to go home (most of those whose time was up re-shipped in the *Essex*), and on July 25th she sailed for the United States.

The *Essex* with the other three headed for Albemarle Island, and on July 28th sighted another British whaler. It was a region and a season of light airs and calms, but the *Essex* rigged a drag that when dropped in the water from the spritsail-yard was hauled aft by a line running through a block on the end of an outrigger aft, and this, although laborious, gave the ship a speed of two knots per hour. As the whaler got out boats to tow his ship, Porter sent a couple of boats of musketeers to drive them on board again. So she was headed off and then other boats were sent to board her. The stranger then hauled down her flag, but before the boats could get alongside a breeze came. At that she hoisted her colors, fired on the Yankee boats and escaped, for the *Essex*

did not get the wind until too late. Porter was greatly mortified for the reason that this was the first ship that had escaped him.

However, on September 15th, while cruising among the Galapagos Islands, a whaler was seen cutting in a whale. The *Essex* was disguised by sending down the small yards, and succeeded in getting within four miles of her before she took alarm, and then by making sail Porter overhauled her. It was now learned that she was the *Sir Andrew Hammond*, of twelve guns and thirty-one men, and that she was the ship that had run away on July 28th. Luckily for the *Essex* she had ample stores of excellent beef, pork, bread, wood, and water.

Returning now to Banks Bay, the appointed rendezvous, the *Essex* was joined by the *Essex Junior*. Lieutenant Downes brought the news from Valparaiso that several English frigates had been sent to hunt the *Essex*. At this Porter determined to go to the Marquesas Islands, where he could give the *Essex* a thorough overhauling in safety. He had cleared those waters of the British whalers and letters of marque, and determined to fit his ship for a battle with equal force before sailing for home. He reached Nukahiva with his squadron on October 23d, built a fort to protect the harbor, and immediately began taking down the masts of the *Essex* in order to make everything aloft—spars and

The *Essex* and her Prizes at Nukahiva in the Marquesas Islands.

From an engraving by Strickland of a drawing by Captain Porter.

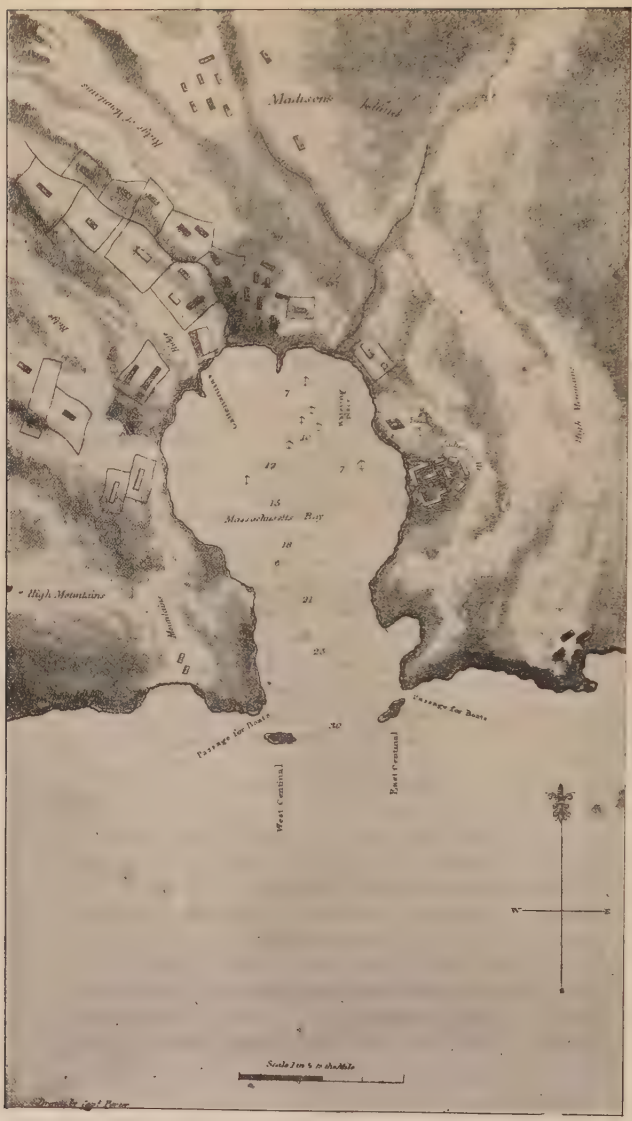
rigging—as sound as possible. In November the *New Zealander* was sent home with a full cargo of oil, but, unfortunately for the Americans, both she and the *Georgiana*, sent previously, were recaptured when almost in port by British blockaders. They were very rich prizes for the British tars.

Nukahiva lies in the tropical climate of the South Pacific—a climate where the sea and the air dance together under an unclouded sun; where the wanton waves tumble and roll invitingly on the beeches; where seemingly the wind-driven light splashes the swaying fronds of the cocoanut-palms; where the air of night is soft and sweet and wooing; where nature asks no labor in return for her bounties; where the thoughts of the people run only to war and love. It was to Jack the ideal country—a paradise on earth.

There were several tribes on Nukahiva. The sailors made friends with those living close at hand, and subdued those from farther away who came to make trouble. And thereafter they worked upon the ships by day, and at night, by turns, frolicked with the friendly natives.

Says Farragut in his journal:

"During our stay at this island the youngsters — I among the number — were sent on board the vessel commanded by our chaplain



Map of the Harbor in which the *Essex* and her Prizes lay.

After a drawing by Captain Porter.

for the purpose of continuing our studies away from temptation."

The prisoners, having liberty as well as the crews, not only went looking for temptation but they got together and planned to get in a lot of native canoes and carry the *Essex Junior* by assault, when, the *Essex* being dismantled, they hoped to capture the entire Yankee force. A traitor revealed the plot, however, and the prisoners were thereafter kept well in hand.

And then came an incipient mutiny. The sailormen had enjoyed life with their friends, the Nukahivas, so much that when, in December, Porter determined to go in search of an enemy worthy of the ship, they first grumbled, and then some of them, under the lead of an Englishman named Robert White, talked of refusing to go at all.

This talk reached flood-tide when on Sunday, December 9, 1813, a lot of the men from the *Essex* visited the *Essex Junior*, when White openly boasted that the crew would refuse to get the anchor at the word from Captain Porter. But White was very much mistaken. His words were reported to Porter, who, next morning, mustered the men on the port side of the deck and then, with a drawn sword lying across the capstan before him, said:

"All of you who are in favor of weighing

A Marquesan War-canoe.

From an engraving by Strickland of a drawing by Captain Porter.

the anchor when I give the order, pass over to the starboard side."

They all passed across the deck promptly. Then he called out White, and asked him about his Sunday boasting. White denied having made the boast, but a number of the crew testified to what he had said, and at that Porter turned on the fellow and said in a burst of anger:

"Run, you scoundrel, for your life."

"And away the fellow went over the starboard gangway." So Farragut tells the story. He was picked up by one of the ever-present native canoes and carried ashore.

After all it was a lucky affair for him, for the cruise of the *Essex* was drawing to a close, and had he remained in her he would have been hanged, very likely, by his countrymen as a traitor.

Having addressed the men briefly, praising their good qualities and telling them he "would blow them all to eternity before they should succeed in a conspiracy," he ordered them to man the capstan, a fiddler began to play "The Girl I Left Behind Me," the "anchor fairly flew to the bows," the sails were spread, and the *Essex* and *Essex Junior* sailed away, leaving Lieutenant John Gamble with twenty-one men, to look after the *Seringapatam*, the *Sir Andrew Hammond*, and the *Greenwich* until Porter could return for them.

CHAPTER II

PORTER'S GALLANT ACTION AT VALPARAISO

A GENEROUS RECEPTION FOR A PREDATORY BRITISH FRIGATE — HILLYAR'S LUCKY ESCAPE — HILLYAR'S EXPLICIT ORDERS — WHEN THE *ESSEX* HAD LOST HER TOP-MAST THE *PHŒBE* AND THE *CHERUB* ATTACKED THE YANKEE IN NEUTRAL WATER—IT WAS A TWO-TO-ONE FIGHT AND THE ENEMY HAD LONG GUNS TO OUR SHORT—THE BRITISH HAD TO GET BEYOND THE RANGE OF THE *ESSEX*—MAGNIFICENT BRAVERY OF THE YANKEE CREW WHEN UNDER THE FIRE OF THE LONG RANGE BRITISH GUNS —THE *ESSEX* ON FIRE — FOUGHT TO THE LAST GASP — PORTER'S INTERRUPTED VOYAGE HOME—THE MEN WHO WERE LEFT AT NUKAHIVA IN SORRY STRAITS AT LAST.

The *Essex*, with her consort, the *Essex Junior*, got up anchor at Nukahiva on December 12, 1813. For two days they were in the offing and then they sailed for the coast of South America. They sighted the Andes early in January, and after getting water at San Maria and calling at Concepcion, went to Valparaiso, where they arrived on February 3, 1814. There Porter learned that the British frigate *Phœbe*, Captain James Hillyar, had been on the coast some time looking for the *Essex*. So Porter determined to await her at Valparaiso.

To make the time pass pleasantly a grand reception was given to the officials of the city and their friends on the night of the 7th, the *Essex Junior*, meantime, having been stationed outside to watch for the enemy. As it happened the enemy was seen next morning while yet the men of the *Essex* were taking down the bunting with which the ship had been decorated. But when Captain Porter came to read the signals on his guard-ship he found that two ships were in sight instead of the one looked for. After a time the two appeared and displayed British colors, and the *Essex Junior* was obliged to come into the port. And what made matters still more uncomfortable was the fact that half of the crew of the *Essex* were on shore enjoying life sailor fashion.

This last fact had not escaped the eye of the patriotic mate of an English merchantman lying in the harbor, and jumping into a small boat he rowed outside to tell his countrymen about the crew of the *Essex*. As it appeared very soon after this, the two British ships outside were the *Phœbe* already mentioned and the eighteen-gun war-ship *Cherub*, Captain Tucker.

Captain Hillyar, of the *Phœbe*, very naturally assumed that the Yankee sailors on shore were already so full of the excellent native wine of the country that even if got on board they would not be able to make a fight. The wind

was in just the right direction to enable him to take his two ships into port and handle them there with certainty. It was true that Valparaiso was a neutral port, but that fact was considered unimportant. Captain Hillyar had been sent there expressly to capture the *Essex*, and the opportunity to do it comfortably seemed to have been made as if to order. So he cleared his ship for action, and, leaving the *Cherub* outside, steered boldly for the *Essex*.

But when the *Phœbe* swept up beside the Yankee ship Captain Hillyar experienced a very great revulsion of feeling. He had approached the *Essex* under the quarter, where not one of her guns could bear on him, and then slightly shifting his helm he ranged up alongside and within fifteen feet of her. And then to his utter discomfiture he found the Yankee guns fully manned, and every man save one was fit and eager for fight.

The warlike ardor of the Englishman instantly evaporated, and he remembered that he had met Captain Porter some years before on the Mediterranean station, and that they had exchanged friendly visits. Instead of ordering his men to fire he jumped on a gun, where he could get a better view of the deck of the *Essex*, and said, with marked politeness:

"Captain Hillyar's compliments to Captain Porter, and hopes he is well."

And Captain Porter, who had never felt better in his life than at that moment, replied:

"Very well, I thank you; but I hope you will not come too near for fear some accident might take place which would be disagreeable to you." And with that he waved his trumpet toward some of the crew forward who, with ropes in hand, were awaiting the signal, and they instantly triced a couple of kedge anchors out to the weather yard-arms ready for dropping on the enemy to grapple him fast in reach of the well-trained Yankee boarders, armed with sharpened cutlasses and dirks made from old files.

Indeed the Yankee forecastlemen were so eager that they swarmed to the rail as the anchors rose to the yard-arms, while one of them, a quarter-gunner named Adam Roach, with his sleeves rolled up and cutlass in hand, climbed out on the cathead and stood there, in plain view of the British marines, awaiting the moment when the ships should come together.

But they did not come together, yard-arm to yard-arm, either then or afterward. Captain Hillyar hastily braced his yards aback and "exclaimed with great agitation:"

"I had no intention of getting on board of you—I had no intention of coming so near you; I am sorry I came so near you."

"Well," said Porter, "you have no business

where you are. *If you touch a rope yarn of this ship, I shall board instantly.*" Then he hailed the *Essex Junior*, that was lying handy by, and ordered Lieutenant Downes to prepare to repel the enemy.

The *Phœbe* fell off with her jib-boom over the American deck, her bows exposed to the broadside of the American guns, and her stern exposed to the broadside of the *Essex Junior*.

At that moment the one member of the crew who had come on board the *Essex* drunk, narrowly escaped precipitating the battle. He was a big boy and served as powder-monkey. While standing beside his gun with a slow-burning match in hand waiting for orders, "he saw, through the port, someone on the *Phœbe* grinning at him." He was deeply offended at once.

"My fine fellow, I'll stop your making faces," he said, and leaned over to put his match to the gun's priming. The lieutenant in charge saw the move and knocked the youth to the deck. Had he fired the gun a fight would have followed and the *Phœbe* would have been taken. As it was she passed free, although some of her yards overlapped those of the *Essex*, and a little later she came to anchor half a mile away.

"We thus lost an opportunity of taking her, though we had observed the strict neutrality of the port under very aggravating circumstances."

So wrote Farragut, but no American at this day regrets the action of Captain Porter. It was, indeed, "over-forbearance, under great provocation," but it showed the high sense of honor of a typical American officer, and every American reads the story of the *Essex* with unalloyed pleasure. Such exhibitions as this of the American spirit have done more than cannon-shot to promote and to preserve peace between the nations. Captain Hillyar was so much impressed by it that he promised Porter that he, too, would respect the neutrality of the port, and he would have done so, very likely, only that he was handicapped by his orders from the Admiralty, which compelled him to "capture the *Essex* with the least possible risk to his vessel and crew." Hillyar was a cool and calculating man of fifty years. As he said to his first lieutenant, Mr. William Ingram, he had gained his reputation in single-ship encounters and he only expected to "retain it by an explicit obedience to orders."

That he was going to take "the least possible risk" appeared a few days later when Porter asked him to send the *Cherub* to the lee side of the harbor and meet the *Essex* with the *Phœbe* alone. The *Phœbe* and the *Cherub* had by that time replenished their stores and taken a station outside. Hillyar at first agreed to do so, and made preparations for the fight. Among

other things he had a huge flag painted with a motto in answer to Porter's burgee containing "Free Trade and Sailor's Rights." The British motto read: "God and Country; British Sailors' Best Rights; Traitors Offend Both." It was a day when such displays were fashionable among sailors, and Porter at once painted another which he hoisted to the mizzen, where it read: "God, our Country and Liberty; Tyrants Offend them."

Such things seem rather silly now, but they were inspiring to Jack in those days. With his banners flaunting before the Yankee eyes Captain Hillyar hove his main-yard aback off the weather-side of the harbor, having previously sent the *Cherub* a fair distance to leeward. Then he fired a gun to invite the *Essex* out. Captain Porter accepted the invitation and stood out of the harbor. He found he could outsail the *Phœbe*, and he got near enough to fire several shots from his long twelves that almost reached her, but she squared away for the *Cherub*, and Porter had to let her go.

Meantime Porter "had received certain information" that the frigate *Tagus* and two others were coming after him, while the sloop-of-war *Raccoon*, that had gone to the northwest coast of North America to destroy the fur-gathering establishment of John Jacob Astor, was to be expected at Valparaiso at any time.

So Porter determined to sail out of the harbor, trusting to the speed of the *Essex* to carry him clear of the superior force. Should he succeed in drawing the enemy clear of the harbor the *Essex Junior* was at once to make sail also.

But the day after arriving at this determination a heavy squall came on from the south, the port cable of the *Essex* broke, and she began dragging the starboard one right out to sea. Without delay Porter made sail, setting his top-gallant sails over reefed top-sails, and stood out of the harbor. As he opened up the sea he saw that he had a chance for sailing between the southwest point of the harbor and the enemy—passing to windward of them, in fact, and so getting clear without trouble. The top-gallant sails were at once clewed up and the yards braced to sail close hauled. The *Essex* was making a course that was just what Porter wanted, and he was just clearing the point when a sudden squall from around the corner of the land struck the ship, knocking the maintopmast over the lee rail into the sea, and the men who were still aloft furling the top-gallant sail were lost.

At once both of the enemy's ships gave chase, and Porter, after clearing the wreckage, turned to beat back to his old anchorage. But because he was crippled, and because of a sudden shift of wind, he could not make it, and so he "ran

close into a small bay about three-quarters of a mile to leeward of the battery on the east side of the harbor," and there let go his anchor "within pistol-shot of the shore."

Here he was as much in neutral waters as he would have been at the usual anchorage, but the enemy, with mottoes and banners in abundance flying, came down to attack the cripple. The *Cherub* came cautiously to the wind off the bow of the *Essex*, the *Phœbe*, with equal caution, off her stern, and at 3.54 P.M., on March 28, 1814, in the presence of the whole population of Valparaiso, who thronged to the bluffs, the battle, that was to end the career of the *Essex* as an American frigate, began. To fully appreciate the fight that followed, the reader should recall the fact that in spite of the protests of Captain Porter the *Essex* had been compelled to sail with a battery of forty short thirty-twos in place of the long twelves that he wanted. In addition to these she carried six long twelves, three of which, when this fight began, were arranged to fight at the bow and three at the stern. Her crew numbered two hundred and fifty-five when she dragged her anchor, but of these at least four were lost from the top-gallant yard. The exact number is not given.

On the other hand the *Phœbe*, under the circumstances, was alone in weight of metal supe-

rior to the *Essex*. On her main deck were thirty long eighteens, to which were added sixteen short thirty-twos, one howitzer, and in the tops six three-pounders. In all she carried fifty-three guns. She carried more guns than ships of her class usually did, because she had been fitted out especially to catch the *Essex* with as little risk as possible. Her crew numbered three hundred and twenty, the usual number having been added to, when she was taking in supplies, by gathering sailors from the British ships in port. The *Cherub* mounted eighteen short thirty-twos, eight short twenty-fours, and two long nines. Her crew, with the additions received in port, numbered one hundred and eighty men.

But this was a battle fought at long range. Captain Hillyar obeyed his instructions to take as little risk as possible, and he held his ships beyond the range of Porter's short thirty-twos. It was therefore a fight in which five hundred men were pitted against two hundred and fifty-one, and the fifteen long guns in the broadside of the *Phœbe* and both of the long guns of the *Cherub*—in short, seventeen long guns, throwing two hundred and eighty-eight pounds of metal, were pitted against six long guns, throwing by actual weight only sixty-six pounds of metal. That was the actual preponderance when the battle began, but even that did not

satisfy the ideas of the British captains in their desire to obey their orders to take as little risk as possible, for the *Cherub*, finding her position off the bow of the *Essex* too hot, wore around and took a station near the *Phœbe*, where Porter could bring only three guns, throwing together but thirty-three pounds of metal, to bear on the two of them with their seventeen long guns throwing two hundred and eighty-eight pounds of metal. Rarely in the history of the world has a fight been maintained against such odds as these. The Englishmen did, indeed, draw in closer at one time of the battle, but it was for only a brief time. The short guns of the *Essex* soon made them withdraw to a safer distance.

When the first gun was fired at 3.54 P.M., Porter had not yet been able to get a spring on his cable and could not bring a gun to bear on either ship. For five minutes the *Essex* lay as an idle target. But as the spring was made fast and the cable veered, the long twelves began to bark and it was then that the *Cherub* made haste to get clear of the fire from forward, and take a place near the *Phœbe*. There both delivered a raking fire which "continued about ten minutes, but produced no visible effect," to quote Hillyar's report to Commodore Brown of the Jamaica station. But if the British fire produced no "visible effect," the fire of the guns of the *Essex* was so well directed that Hillyar

"increased our distance by wearing," and he confesses that "appearances were a little inauspicious." In fact, at the end of half an hour both the British ships sailed out of range to repair damages alow and aloft. The *Phœbe* alone had seven holes at the water-line to plug and she had lost the use of her main-sail and jib, her fore, main, and mizzen stays were shot away, and her jib-boom was badly wounded. This much the British admit.

But it had been a losing fight on the *Essex*, nevertheless. The springs on the cable were shot away three times and could be renewed only after delays that prevented working the guns under full speed, and the heavy shot of the enemy's long guns had been cutting down the crew. And then the enemy returned once more to the fight. Brave Lieutenant William Ingram, of the *Phœbe*, wanted to close in and carry the *Essex* by boarding. The two British ships had at this time more than two men to the one of the *Essex*, but Hillyar refused, quoting the orders he had received from his superiors as a reason, and saying he had "determined not to leave anything to chance." He would not face Yankee cutlasses wielded in defence of the *Essex*. So the safest possible positions were chosen, and fire was again opened at 5.35 P.M. It was "a most galling fire, which we were powerless to return." Even

the *Essex's* "stern guns could not be brought to bear."

At this juncture, the wind having shifted, Captain Porter ordered his crew to slip the cable and make sail; and it was then found that the running gear had been so badly cut that only the flying jib could be spread.

Did the courage and hope of the brave American falter at this? Not at all. Spreading that one little triangle of canvas by halyard and sheet to the wind, he loosed the square sails, and with their unrestrained and ragged breadths flapping from the yards, the *Essex* wore around, and while the shot of the enemy filled the air above her deck with splinters, she bore down upon them until her short guns began to reach them, and the *Cherub* was driven out of range altogether, while Hillyar made haste to obey his orders about taking as little risk as possible—made haste to spread his canvas and sail away to a point where he would be clear of the deadly aim of the Yankee gunners. The *Phœbe* "was enabled by the better condition of her sails to choose her own distance, suitable for her long guns, and kept up a most destructive fire on our helpless ship." So says Farragut.

But fearful as was the scene on the doomed *Essex*, the story of the deeds of her heroic crew stir the blood as few other stories of

Fight of the *Essex* with the *Phœbe* and *Cherub*.

From an engraving by Strickland of a drawing by Captain Porter.

battle can do. "Dying men who had hardly ever attracted notice among the ship's company, uttered sentiments worthy of a Washington. You might have heard in all directions: 'Don't give her up, Logan'—a sobriquet for Porter—'Hurrah for Liberty!' and similar expressions."

A man named Bissley, a young Scotchman by birth, on losing a leg, said: "I hope I have this day proved myself worthy of the country of my adoption. I am no longer of any use to you or to her, so good-by!" And with that he plunged through a port. And John Ripley, who had suffered in like fashion, also went overboard deliberately. John Alvinson, having been struck by an eighteen-pound shot, cried: "Never mind, shipmates; I die in defence of free trade and sailors' ri——" and so his spirit fled while the last word quivered on his lips. William Call lost his leg and was carried down to the berth-deck. As he lay there weltering in his blood awaiting his turn with the doctor, he saw Quarter-Gunner Roach—he who had so bravely headed the boarders—skulking, and "dragged his shattered stump all around the bag-house, pistol in hand, trying to get a shot at him."

And there was Lieutenant J. G. Cowell. He had his leg shot off just above the knee and was carried below. The surgeon on seeing

him at once left a common sailor to attend to him, but Cowell said:

"No, doctor, none of that; fair play is a jewel. One man's life is as dear as another's; I would not cheat any poor fellow out of his turn." And so he bled to death before his turn came.

In the record kept by young Farragut we have a wonderful story of a battle as seen by a lad of twelve. "I performed the duties of captain's aid, quarter-gunner, powder-boy, and in fact did everything that was required of me," he wrote.

"I shall never forget the horrid impression made upon me at the sight of the first man I had ever seen killed. He was a boatswain's mate, and was fearfully mutilated. It staggered and sickened me at first, but they soon began to fall around me so fast that it all appeared like a dream, and produced no effect on my nerves. I can remember well, while I was standing near the captain, just abaft the mainmast, a shot came through the waterways and glanced upwards, killing four men who were standing by the side of the gun, taking the last one in the head and scattering his brains over both of us. But this awful sight did not affect me half as much as the death of the first poor fellow. I neither thought of nor noticed anything but the working of the guns.

"On one occasion Midshipman Isaacs came up to the captain and reported that a quarter-gunner named Roach had deserted his post. The only reply of the captain, addressed to me, was, 'Do your duty, sir.' I seized a pistol and went in pursuit of the fellow, but did not find him.

"Soon after this, some gun-primers were wanted, and I was sent after them. In going below, while I was on the ward-room ladder, the captain of the gun directly opposite the hatchway was struck full in the face by an eighteen-pound shot, and fell back on me. We tumbled down the hatch together. I struck on my head, and, fortunately, he fell on my hips. I say fortunately, for, as he was a man of at least two hundred pounds' weight, I would have been crushed to death if he had fallen directly across my body. I lay for some moments stunned by the blow, but soon recovered consciousness enough to rush up on deck. The captain, seeing me covered with blood, asked if I was wounded, to which I replied, 'I believe not, sir.' 'Then,' said he, 'where are the primers?' This first brought me completely to my senses, and I ran below again and carried the primers on deck. When I came up the second time I saw the captain fall, and in my turn ran up and asked if he was wounded. He answered me almost in the same words, 'I be-

lieve not, my son ; but I felt a blow on the top of my head.' He must have been knocked down by the windage of a passing shot, as his hat was somewhat damaged."

With such scenes as these on deck Porter strove to overtake the enemy. The picture of that American ship, with her unsheeted sails flapping in the wind as she struggled to get within range, is among the most heroic known to history. It was a vain struggle. The wind veered once more. The shot from the long guns of the enemy were ripping her hull to pieces, and, in the language of the British first lieutenant, murdering her crew. The brave American commander was baffled but was not yet conquered. Putting up his helm he turned once more toward the shore, determined to beach the ship, broadside on, fight to the last gasp, and then blow her to pieces.

Firing from his stern guns as he ran, he reached out for the sands until they were but half a mile away, and then once more the treacherous wind shifted, and catching the sails aback, wrapped their torn folds as a shroud about the masts. A hawser was bent to the sheet-anchor, which was then let go. That brought her head around where the long guns would bear, but the hawser broke a minute later, and once more the *Essex* drifted off-shore a helpless target.

And then came an explosion below. The ship was on fire, and the men came rushing up on deck, "many with their clothes burning." The men on deck hastened to rip the burning garments from their shipmates, but some whose clothes were flaming were ordered to "jump overboard and quench the flames." Smoke was rolling up the hatches, and "many of the crew, and even some of the officers, hearing the order to jump overboard, took it for granted that the fire had reached the magazine, and that the ship was about to blow up; so they leaped into the water, and attempted to reach the shore."

Hope had at last fled from the doomed ship. The decks were strewn with the dead and wounded. There were twenty-one bodies in one pile on the main deck. The long-range shot of the enemy were sinking her. The hold was in flames. The captain called for his lieutenants to ask their opinion of the condition of affairs, and found but one, Lieutenant McKnight, to answer the call. Of the two hundred and fifty-one men who began the fight only seventy-five, including officers and boys, remained on the ship in condition fit for duty. Further effort was useless, "and at 6.20 P.M. the painful order was given to haul down the colors."

At that, Benjamin Hazen, a Groton seaman

(who, though painfully wounded, had remained at his post, and at the last had joined in the request to haul down the flag to save the wounded), bade adieu in hearty fashion to those around him, said he had determined never to survive the surrender of the *Essex*, and jumped overboard. He was drowned.

In what has been said regarding the handling of the *Phœbe* there was no desire to cast a slur upon the personal character of Captain Hillyar. He had proved his bravery in previous contests. The point to be made clear is that his superiors had so far learned to respect Yankee prowess that he was under definite order to take no unnecessary risks. He conducted the fight in the only way that insured certain victory. Every fair-minded American will grant what Sir Howard Douglas, in his text-book on gunnery (page 108), claims—that "this action displayed all that can reflect honor on the science and admirable conduct of Captain Hillyar and his crew," save only so far as he broke his word of honor pledged to Captain Porter. And that is to say that it is admitted that a sneer at the "respectful distance the *Phœbe* kept" is "a fair acknowledgment of the ability with which Captain Hillyar availed himself of the superiority of his arms."

The losses of the *Essex* were fifty-eight killed and mortally wounded, thirty-nine severe-

ly wounded, twenty-seven slightly wounded, and thirty-one missing, the most of whom, if not all, were drowned in trying to swim ashore when the *Essex* was on fire. These numbers were given by the American officers. Hillyar reported that the *Essex* lost one hundred and eleven in killed or wounded. The difference in these official reports is unquestionably due to the fact that Hillyar, naturally enough, did not count as wounded those of his prisoners who had received minor scratches and contusions, even though these wounds had temporarily disabled the men during the battle. Nevertheless, the favorite British historian James, although he had read Hillyar's letter, wrote:

"The *Essex*, as far as is borne out by proof (the only safe way where an American is concerned), had twenty-four men killed and forty-five wounded. But Captain Porter, thinking by exaggerating his loss to prop up his fame, talks of fifty-eight killed and mortally wounded, thirty-nine severely, twenty-seven slightly."

And Allen, whose latest edition appeared in 1890, follows the false statement of James.

The British loss was, of course, trifling. They had five killed and ten wounded. But it is not unconsoling to reflect that the *Phœbe* received in all eight shot at and under the water-line, and that she and the *Cherub* were not a little cut up aloft—in short the damage inflicted by

the *Essex* was greater than the British *Java*, *Macedonian*, and *Guerrière* all together inflicted on the American ships in their battles. Captain Hillyar had good reason for writing to his superior that "the defence of the *Essex*, taking into consideration our superiority of force and the very discouraging circumstance of her having lost her maintopmast and being twice on fire, did honor to her brave defenders."

As Roosevelt says, "Porter certainly did everything a man can do to contend successfully with the overwhelming force opposed to him. . . . As an exhibition of dogged courage it has never been surpassed since the time when the Dutch Captain Kaesoon, after fighting two long days, blew up his disabled ship, devoting himself and all his crew to death, rather than surrender to the hereditary foes of his race."

While no one can justly criticise Captain Hillyar for his handling of his ship during the battle, there is something to be said about his having made an attack on the American ship under the circumstances. And this cannot be better said than in the words of Roosevelt, whose fairness has been acknowledged by the English in the most emphatic manner. He says:

"When Porter decided to anchor near shore, in neutral water, he could not anticipate Hillyar's deliberate and treacherous breach of faith.

I do not allude to the mere disregard of neutrality. Whatever international moralists may say, such disregard is a mere question of expediency. If the benefits to be gained by attacking a hostile ship in neutral waters are such as to counterbalance the risk of incurring the enmity of the neutral power, why then the attack ought to be made. Had Hillyar, when he first made his appearance off Valparaiso, sailed in with his two ships, the men at quarters and guns out, and at once attacked Porter, considering the destruction of the *Essex* as outweighing the insult to Chili, why his behavior would have been perfectly justifiable. In fact, this is unquestionably what he intended to do; but he suddenly found himself in such a position that, in the event of hostilities, *his* ship would be the captured one, and he owed his escape purely to Porter's over-forbearance, under great provocation. Then he gave his word to Porter that he would not infringe on the neutrality; and he never dared to break it, until he saw Porter was disabled and almost helpless! This may seem strong language to use about a British officer, but it is justly strong. Exactly as any outsider must consider Warrington's attack on the British brig *Nautilus* in 1815 as a piece of needless cruelty, so any outsider must consider Hillyar as having most treacherously broken faith with Porter."

Fair as this statement must seem to candid minds, there is yet a word to be said for Captain Hillyar. A fair interpretation of his orders demanded that he break his faith and attack the ship, and as an officer accustomed to obey all orders from his superiors, he believed his obligation to the Admiralty and his country was greater than his obligation to keep his word. Captain Hillyar believed that his country demanded that he break faith with Porter, and the proof that the British nation has ever since approved of his treachery toward an American is found in the fact that "the naval medal is granted for the capture" of the *Essex* (see Allen); that the officer who sailed her to England was at once promoted, and that every British writer who has referred to the action has praised Captain Hillyar in the highest terms, and refers to Captain Porter as James did when he said: "Few, even in his own country, will venture to speak well of Captain David Porter."

After the battle the *Essex* was repaired and sent to England, where she was added to the British Navy. It is worth noting that she was built in 1779 by the people of Salem, Massachusetts, and the surrounding country, who were enthusiastic in their desire to revenge the injuries done by French cruisers to American commerce. She was the product of the Fed-

eralist party ardor, and Rear-Admiral George Preble says, "the Federalists considered it a patriotic duty to cut down the finest sticks of their wood lots to help build the 'noble structure' that was to chastise French insolence and piracy." They gave her as a present to the nation, and as armed at that time she was probably the most efficient ship of her size afloat.

The *Essex Junior* was disarmed and the American prisoners were put into her, and she was sent as a cartel to New York. Off the east coast of Long Island, on July 5, 1814, she was detained by British cruisers so long that the Americans were lawfully released from their parole, when Porter and a boat's crew escaped ashore aided by a fog, and that was the only occasion during that cruise of this Yankee captain, that weather did aid him. He landed in Long Island, where he had to show his commission before the people would believe his story. He was then carried to New York by enthusiastic admirers, and was there received with every mark of honor. Meantime, the *Essex Junior* was allowed to come in also.

A few words will tell the fate of Lieutenant Gamble and the men left at Nukahiva with the captured whalers *Seringapatam*, *Greenwich*, and *Sir Andrew Hammond*. Im-

mediately after Porter sailed away the natives began to rob the Americans of everything they could carry away, and Gamble had "to land and overpower them." On February 28, 1814, one man was drowned accidentally. A week later four men deserted in a whale-boat to join their native sweethearts. On April 12th Gamble rigged the *Seringapatam* and the *Hammond* for sea, intending to burn the *Greenwich*, but the men became mutinous. So Gamble removed all the arms, as he supposed, to the *Greenwich;* but when he boarded the *Seringapatam* on May 7th, the men there attacked him, shot him in the foot with a pistol, set him adrift in a native canoe, and then sailed away with the *Seringapatam*, leaving Gamble with but eight men.

Two days later the natives came off to assault the ship. They were repulsed, but Midshipman William W. Feltus was killed, and three men wounded. The fight occurred on the *Hammond.* The following night the survivors went to sea. They eventually reached the Sandwich Islands, where they were captured by the *Cherub*, and were detained on her seven months. They finally reached New York in August, 1815.

The voyage of the *Essex* ended in disasters all around, due solely to the misfortune of losing a top-mast in a squall off the Point of Angels at

A Marquesan "Chief Warrior."

From an engraving by Strickland of a drawing by Captain Porter.

Valparaiso. But she had captured twelve British ships, aggregating 3,369 tons, armed with one hundred and seven guns and carrying three hundred and two men. She had maintained herself for more than a year entirely from supplies captured from the enemy—she did not cost the national treasury a cent after her first outfit. A great fleet of British ships were sent at large expense to search for her. On the whole her cruise damaged the enemy millions of dollars—Porter estimated the damage at $6,000,000—and her crew, from master to boy, had "afforded an example of courage in adversity that it would be difficult to match elsewhere."

Porter was, indeed, defeated, but the victory of the enemy was like those obtained at Bunker Hill and on Lake Champlain during the war of the Revolution. It was a British victory but it strengthened the power of the young republic, and gave renown to the defeated leaders.

> When Grecian bands lent Persia's legions aid,
> On Asia's shores their banners wide displayed,
> Though heaven denied success—their leader's name
> Has still ranked foremost in the rolls of fame;
> Hence the RETREAT, the theme of every tongue,
> Through every age and clime incessant rung;
> With Zenophon the bard adorned his lays,
> And gave the mighty chief immortal praise.
> With him the historian grac'd his proudest page,
> And bade his *glories* live through every age:
> Thus *thine*, O PORTER, shall, in lays sublime

Of future poets, live through endless time;
Thy noble daring, though with adverse fate,
The rich historic page shall long relate,
And the glad voice of freemen's loud acclaim
Teach lisping infancy thy honored name.

Captain Porter aided in the defence of Baltimore after his return home. After the war he served as a commissioner on naval affairs, and in 1826 resigned his commission. He was afterward American Minister to Turkey, and died at Constantinople in 1843. His body was brought to America and was eventually buried in Woodlawn Cemetery, Philadelphia.

CHAPTER III

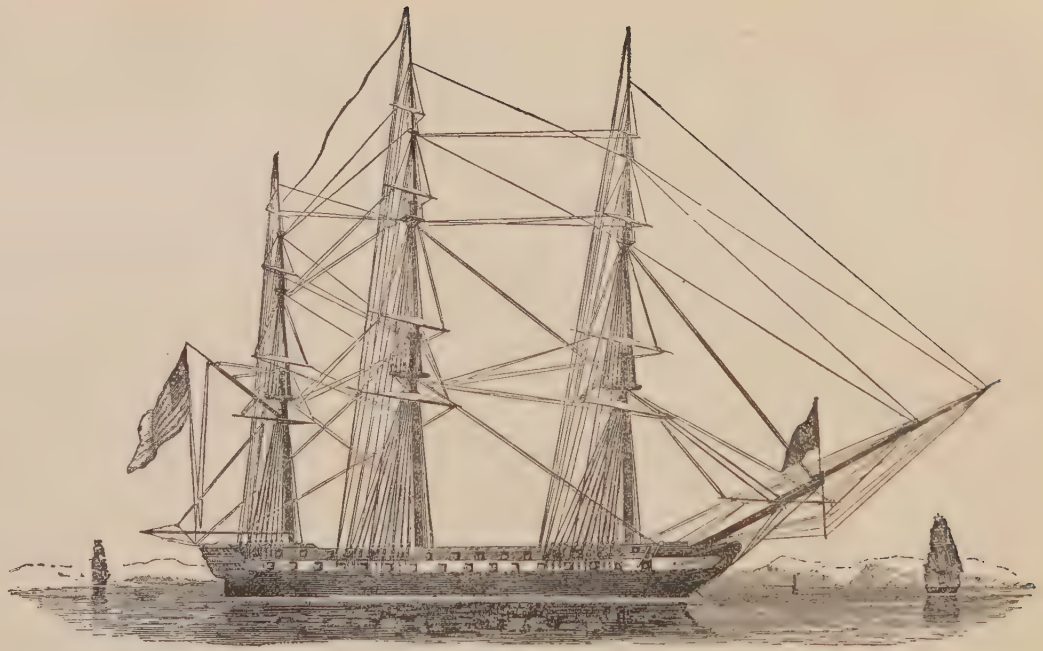
TALES OF THE YANKEE CORVETTES

A LITTLE LOP-SIDED FRIGATE REBUILT INTO A SUPERIOR SLOOP-OF-WAR—OVERLAND (ALMOST) TO ESCAPE THE BLOCKADE—HER LUCK AS A CRUISER—A MARVELLOUS RACE WITH A BRITISH FRIGATE OVER A COURSE FOUR HUNDRED MILES LONG—SAVED BY A SQUALL—CORNERED IN THE PENOBSCOT—THE GALLANT FIGHT OF THE YANKEE CREW AGAINST OVERWHELMING NUMBERS—BUILDING A NEW NAVY—THE SHORT-LIVED PORTSMOUTH CORVETTE *FROLIC*—ONE BROADSIDE WAS ENOUGH—CAPTURED BY THE ENEMY—SWIFT AND DEADLY WORK OF THE CREW OF THE YANKEE *PEACOCK* WHEN THEY MET THE *EPERVIER*—DISTINCTLY A LUCKY SHIP—FATE OF THE *SIREN* AFTER THE COFFIN FLOATED.

Of the seventeen war-ships, big and little, that were named on the register of the American Navy when war was declared in 1812, the *Adams*, rated as a twenty-eight-gun frigate, lay at Washington. It had been determined to alter this ship into what was known as a corvette. Readers not trained to a life at sea not infrequently find themselves puzzled by the terms applied to the old style war-ships, and no term is quite so annoying as that of corvette, for the reason that it is used interchangeably with sloop-of-war. The dictionaries do not

help one very much. In a "Vocabulaire des Termes de Marine" printed in 1783, a corvette is said to be "a general name for sloops-of-war and all vessels under twenty guns," but it is manifest, from a consideration of the size and force of the *Adams* and other American vessels called corvettes, that American officers applied the name only to the largest ships that had one deck of guns only, with neither a poop nor a forecastle.

A most remarkable ship was the *Adams*, for, when let to a contractor to build, he sublet one side of her to another man who had the instincts of a thief and of a traitor. The sub-contractor, to increase his profits, scamped his timbers and his work. The *Adams* was a creditable ship on one side and a fraud on the other. It is a pity that the name of the scoundrel has not been perpetuated in the accounts of naval matters that have hitherto appeared. When altered at Washington it was necessary, of course, to follow the old lines and she was still lopsided, although lengthened until she could carry twenty-eight guns on the one deck. Her armament in her new fashion included a long twelve for a bow-chaser and thirteen medium-length eighteen-pounders (called Columbiads, sometimes) on each side. It was a pretty good armament for that day, in fact much superior to the ordinary sloop-of-war armament that was made up



United States Razee* *Independence* at Anchor.

From the "Kedge Anchor."

* A Razee is a line-of-battle ship from which the upper deck has been cut, leaving her with two decks of guns.

of two long twelves and twenty of the wretched short thirty-twos.

Captain Charles Morris, who, as the first lieutenant of the *Constitution*, had first gained fame in her race with the British fleet, was placed in command of the rebuilt *Adams*, and Lieutenant Wadsworth, who was second on the *Constitution* in her great race, was made first on the *Adams*. There was a strong blockading squadron in the Chesapeake, but on the night of January 18, 1812, "which came on cloudy, boisterous, and with frequent snow squalls," he headed away for sea. There was a strong northwest wind blowing, and there was not a beacon-light in the bay. Worse still, while the ship was driving along at twelve knots an hour, the two men who were engaged as pilots became confused, and at 11 o'clock at night a light was seen dead ahead which showed that she was fly-

Charles Morris.

From a photograph owned by Mr. C. B. Hall.

ing straight at the land. Instantly her helm was shoved down and she came about on the other tack, but a few minutes later she was thumping over a bar, no one knew where, the heavy swells lifting her clear only to drop her again on the sand. However, over she went, and when it was found she did not leak, Morris decided to send her on her way once more, and at 1 o'clock passed two British ships at Lynnhaven and got out to sea.

Running across to the coast of Africa the *Adams* cruised from Cape Mount to Cape Palmas, then visited the vicinity of the Canaries and the Cape de Verde Islands. "A few small prizes, laden with palm oil and ivory" were taken. On March 25th the *Woodbridge*, a large Indiaman, was overhauled. It was thick weather at the time, and while Captain Morris was taking possession the weather suddenly cleared, when it was seen that a fleet of vessels were jogging along to windward under convoy of two big men-of-war. It took Morris a full day to get clear of the men-of-war.

Returning across the Atlantic the *Adams* ran into Savannah on May 1st—the day on which the British *Epervier*, prize to the Yankee *Peacock*, got in—and remained there till the 8th, when she sailed for the Gulf Stream in search of the Jamaica fleet. He found it with a ship-of-the-line, two frigates, and three

brigs in charge. At the sight of the *Adams* the fleet closed in like a flock of ducks, and although the Yankee dogged them for two days he got nothing—not even a chase from the war-ships. So he sailed to the banks of Newfoundland, where he found only ice and fogs, and so went on to the coast of Ireland, in sight of which he arrived on July 3d. A few prizes were made here, but on July 15th "she stumbled across the eighteen-pounder thirty-six-gun frigate *Tigris*." The *Tigris* was no mean sailer, and in the chase that followed the *Adams* threw overboard all the guns taken from the ships she had captured, her heaviest anchors, and finally some of her own guns. Then the wind died out entirely, and that was good-luck for the *Adams*, for her captain repeated the tactics employed on the *Constitution* off the Jersey beach by towing his ship so far away from the *Tigris* that a lucky slant of wind carried her clear out of sight.

A still more remarkable chase followed this one. It began on July 19th, when two frigates found the *Adams*. The one was fat and slow, the other as lean and eager as a hound. A half a gale of wind was blowing. Every thread of canvas was spread, and for forty hours the frigate and the sloop stretched away across the stormy sea with every sail as round and firm as the breast of a giant runner; with the weather

rigging singing taut; with every man on deck alert, and with each captain pacing to and fro without rest, looking at every turn from the sea to the clouds and from them to his sails and then away to the enemy; with the cutwater sawing through the solid blue as she rose to the swell, and burying itself in smother and foam that tumbled and roared away for half her length ahead as she boiled in the trough of the sea, and the sissing foam swept aft to mingle with the swirling wake. And that for forty hours with the frigate just out of gunshot! They covered four hundred miles with never a loss or a gain on either side, and then under the shades of night the gale hardened into a squall that hid the *Adams* out of sight, when she up helm and swung away so far on another course that when light came the hound had wholly lost the scent.

On returning westward the crew of the *Adams* were attacked by the scurvy. Several died and a considerable number were made unfit for duty, so Captain Morris headed for Portland, Maine. Off the Maine coast, while driving along at ten knots an hour through a fog at 4 o'clock on the morning of August 17th, the *Adams* found land—rock, to speak accurately. She ran up on a ledge until her bow was six feet out of water, and when the sun came to clear the fog the crew found themselves only one hundred

yards from a cliff near Mount Desert. The next tide floated the ship and she continued her course. A little later the British brig *Rifleman* was seen and chased, but the strain of the press of canvas made the *Adams* leak at the rate of nine feet of water into her hold per hour, so Captain Morris gave it up and ran into the Penobscot.

As it happened, the *Rifleman* was able to carry the news of the arrival of the *Adams* to a British fleet, "consisting of two line-of-battle ships, three frigates, three sloops, and ten troop transports" which were lying in wait to descend on Machias. Captain Morris moored his ship at Hampden, twenty-seven miles up the river, where he intended to heave her down and repair the leaking bottom. When the British fleet came after him he made such preparations as were possible to fight. Of his original crew of two hundred and twenty, seventy had died or had been disabled by the scurvy. The others, including one hundred and thirty seamen and officers and twenty marines, many of them sick, were mustered on shore for the fight. Nine of the lighter guns of the *Adams* were set up as a battery on the bluff overlooking the wharf, and these were put in charge of Lieutenant Wadsworth. Morris himself took charge of the wharf. The crew were joined by thirty (some say forty) experienced soldiers, and by a

force of militia variously estimated at from three hundred to six hundred men. Whatever their number, they proved utterly worthless, for they had never been under fire. Anyway, they were but half armed, and the guns they had were the inferior fowling-pieces of that day.

On September 3d came the enemy. There was a land force of six hundred experienced troops, eighty marines, and eighty seamen. There was a force afloat in boats and barges well-armed that raised the whole command to 1,500 men. The crew of the *Adams*, stationed on the wharf, checked the flotilla, in spite of overwhelming numbers, but the American militia fled without firing a gun when the British land forces approached them. Captain Morris was left with only his crew and the thirty regulars to face a force eight times as great. Yet he burned the ship and made a successful retreat without losing a man save those too ill with scurvy to march away. The conduct of the Yankee militia was disgraceful, as it usually was throughout that war; but what shall be said of the failure of the 1,500 experienced men in the British force who were unable to hinder the retreat of the Yankee crew?

As has been noted, when the War of 1812 began, the authorities at Washington were determined to keep their ships in port. That a Yankee ship could meet a British ship of equal

United States Ship-of-war *Columbus* at Anchor.

From the "Kedge Anchor."

force or even of somewhat inferior force and keep her flag afloat seemed impossible. The idea of building anything except for harbor defence was too ridiculous for any consideration. But after the first six months of the war had demonstrated that the capacity and courage of the American personnel was unsurpassed, the ring of broadaxe and hammer, the rasp of saws, and the easy crunch of augers began to make melody for patriotic ears in the yards of the Yankee builders. The frames of ships-of-the-line, and of frigates and of corvettes, as the big sloops were called, rose steadily above the keel-blocks. The names that were given to these new ships showed that the naval authorities of the nation were disposed to flaunt red flags in the face of Johnnie Bull; they were determined to keep alive the memory of American victories by perpetuating the names of the defeated British ships. One frigate was named *Guerrière* and another *Java*, while the new sloops were named *Peacock*, *Frolic*, etc. Not many of the new ships were destined to see service against the British, for the reason that the war ended before they were fully ready. Still, three of the sloops got away to sea, and this chapter shall tell of the fate of one of them and give a part of the brilliant record made by another.

The first that got to sea was the *Frolic*. She

was built at Portsmouth, New Hampshire, famous for its fine ships in the days of wood. Under Master-Commandant Joseph Bainbridge she sailed from the home port in February and some time later fell in with a Carthagenian privateer that was cruising for Yankee merchantmen off the southern coast. The privateer refused to surrender, when called on to do so, and Bainbridge fired one broadside at her, and that one blast sank her so quickly that nearly one hundred of her crew were drowned. As the *Frolic* carried only ten short thirty-twos in a broadside, it is certain that every shot struck the privateer below the water-line as she rolled to the swell. The fact is especially worth mentioning for the reason that it shows the great advantage of training the crew of a war-ship to shoot accurately.

The career of the *Frolic*, however, was brief. On April 20, 1814, when off the extreme south point of Florida, she fell in with the British thirty-six-gun frigate *Orpheus*, Captain Pigot, and the twelve-gun schooner *Shelburne*, Lieutenant Hope. The enemy were to leeward, but both of them were swifter than the *Frolic*. For more than twelve hours she struggled to windward, cutting away her anchors and throwing over her guns, but all in vain, for the *Orpheus* closed on her. The *Frolic* had carried twenty short thirty-twos

and two long twelves, while the *Orpheus* carried sixteen short thirty-twos and twenty-eight long eighteens. Nevertheless, James, in commenting on the surrender of the *Frolic*, says:

"We should not have hesitated to call a French, or even a British, captain, who had acted as Master-Commandant Joseph Bainbridge, of the United States Navy, did in this instance, a ——."

Another of the new corvettes with irritating names was the *Peacock*. She was built in New York City, and sailed under Master-Commandant Lewis Warrington, on March 12, 1814, bound south. Her cruise was without incident until April 28th, when, at 7 o'clock in the morning, a number of vessels were seen to windward. The *Peacock* was at this time not far from Cape Canaveral, Florida. It was learned later that the fleet sighted included two merchantmen under convoy of the British brig sloop *Epervier*, Captain R. W. Wales, of eighteen guns. They were bound from Havana for the Bermudas, and the *Epervier* carried $120,000 in coin.

Because of the result of the battle that followed it is worth mentioning the fact that the *Peacock* class of Yankee sloops were designed with especial reference to the *Epervier* class of brigs, just as the *Terrible* class of cruisers

Lewis Warrington.

From an engraving by Gimbrede of the painting by Jarvis.

were designed in Great Britain with a certain Yankee protected cruiser in mind, in these last years of the nineteenth century.

The *Peacock* having made chase, the wind suddenly shifted to the southward, when the merchantmen made all sail to run away and

the *Epervier* hauled close to the wind on the port tack, and stood toward the *Peacock* quite willing for the fight.

The *Peacock* now had the best of the wind, and when, soon after 10 o'clock, the two ships were approaching each other end on, and had arrived within gunshot, she was headed off wind a bit in order to bring her starboard battery to bear on the *Epervier* and rake her. But Captain Wales, of the *Epervier*, was not to be caught by any such move as that. Putting up his helm, he eased off to meet the Yankee, and then shoving down his helm, he rounded to on the *Peacock's* bow and delivered his starboard broadside, two shots from which struck the foreyard of the *Peacock*, entirely disabling that very important spar. The British captain had clearly outmanœuvred the Yankee up to this time, which was not far from 10.20 A.M.

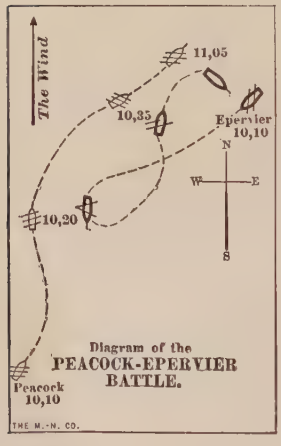


Diagram of the PEACOCK-EPERVIER BATTLE.

Captain Warrington fired his starboard broadside as he passed the *Epervier*, and then ordered his men to load with bar-shot, bundles of scrap-iron (called langrage), etc., in order

to cripple the British brig aloft, and reduce her to a sailing capacity as bad as his own. While the Yankees were doing this the *Epervier* might

The *Peacock* and the *Epervier*.

From a wood-cut in the "Naval Monument."

have sailed away and left the crippled *Peacock*, but Captain Wales was not that kind of a man. On the contrary, he tacked about as rapidly as possible, in spite of the fact that he had to risk a raking fire from the Americans, and then bore down with his port battery to the *Peacock's* starboard.

At this the bar-shot and scrap-iron from the Yankee began to tell on the British head-gear. Jib after jib was cut away, while the sails of the foremast were torn to shreds. The pressure on the after-sails threw her stern down away from the wind and her bow up into it. Then her sails caught aback and the *Peacock* ran across her

stern and fired a few guns to rake her, though because of the headway of the *Peacock* only a few were fired. A moment later the maintopmast of the British ship fell with a crash, and her main-boom was cut in two and fell on the wheel, so that she was for the time helpless.

At that Warrington hauled the *Peacock* close under the port quarter of the *Epervier* and opened a deadly fire of solid shot directed chiefly at the enemy's water-line—the favorite target of the Yankee gunners. One easily pictures the scene at this time as the Yankee crews, stripped to the waist, in the warm summer air, worked like white devils in the sulphurous smoke over their guns. They waved their arms and cheered as they saw the shot knock the splinters low down on the black-painted hull of the half-obscured enemy that was now adrift, unable to turn either to port or starboard. But some of them aimed high enough to dismount every gun on the port side of the *Epervier*, which faced the Yankee.

Meantime, the *Epervier* had been gathering stern way and was drifting on board the *Peacock*. Allen says Captain Wales thought to wear the *Epervier* in order to run on board the *Peacock*, but this is absurd, because she was aback.

On seeing that the *Epervier* was likely to fall aboard the *Peacock*, Captain Wales called

his men aft, intending to make a last brave effort by boarding. But, as James says, "the British crew declined a measure so fraught with danger." Allen says: "A large proportion of the crew evinced a great distaste for the measure." So Captain Wales hauled down his flag at 11 o'clock. The action had lasted forty-five minutes.

Captain Wales showed conspicuous bravery and ability, and his chief officer, Lieutenant John Hackett, ably seconded him. In fact, Hackett had his left arm shattered and was dangerously wounded in the hip by a splinter, "but it was with difficulty that this gallant officer could be persuaded" to leave the deck.

That the crew should have flinched is not a matter of wonder. The British sailors had been accustomed to go at the Frenchmen "hammer and tongs," and "whoop and hurrah." It was a lark to meet a Latin-blood crew. But in 1812 they had a new kind of an enemy to face. It should be remembered that, after they had "seen the countenance" of this enemy for a few months, even the British Admiralty flinched, for James says, on page 402 of Volume VI., that "the Admiralty had issued an order that no eighteen-pounder frigate was voluntarily to engage one of the twenty-four-pounder frigates of America."

This is a slight digression from the story of

the *Peacock-Epervier* fight, but it seems worth the making because it offers an explanation of the rancor and the deliberate falsehoods of the British writers when referring to British naval contests with Yankees. A knowledge of the whole truth about the prowess of American naval seamen had had a disturbing influence on the minds of the British sailors on more than one occasion, and the records of the sea-fights with the Yankees were deliberately falsified in order to preserve the self-confidence of British Jack.

As to the effect of the fire of the two ships, Allen admits that "the *Peacock*, in a short time, unrigged the *Epervier*, and cut her sails into ribands. Most of the lower rigging of the *Epervier* was shot away, and her foremast was left so tottering that the calm state of the weather alone saved it from falling. Her hull was shot in every direction, and she had five feet of water in her hold." In addition to this she had lost, as already told, her maintopmast and her main-boom, and her bowsprit was badly wounded. There were forty-five shot holes in her hull, of which twenty were within a foot of the water-line and dipped under at every roll to let the water spurt in. To realize the significance of the fact that she had five feet of water in her, it must be known that she measured only fourteen feet in depth of hold (the same depth as the *Peacock*).

Allen says that she went into the fight with "a crew of one hundred and two men and sixteen boys." They are especially careful to specify the number of boys when they are defeated. James is at the pains to announce that "two of her men were each seventy years of age!"

Captain Warrington reported that she had a crew of one hundred and twenty-eight—his list of prisoners numbered one hundred and twenty, including the wounded. It is agreed on both sides that she lost eight men killed and fifteen wounded, and that she had enough men at least to work all of her guns efficiently.

On the other hand, the *Peacock* did not receive even one shot in her hull, and the only damage aloft worth mention was the disabling of the foreyard. In fifteen minutes from the time her crew began to repair the damages every cut rope had been rove anew, and half an hour later the foreyard was up in place, repaired fit to stand a gale, and the foresail was spread to the breeze. The broken foreyard was actually sent down on deck, fished, hoisted aloft again, and the sail spread in forty-five minutes. The injury to the crew was scarcely worth mentioning, for not one was killed, and only two were wounded, and they but slightly. Allen says she carried "a picked crew of one hundred and eighty-five seamen." She had, in

fact, including captain and powder-monkeys, one hundred and sixty-six.

In view of the fact that the British gunners were unable to hit the broadside of the ship when half a pistol shot away, a comparison of the armament of the two ships is as absurd as it was when the Yankee *Hornet* shot the British *Peacock* under water in fourteen minutes. However, it ought to be given to complete the record. The *Peacock* in this battle had a broadside of ten guns that threw three hundred and fifteen pounds actual weight of metal at a round. The *Epervier* had one gun less in her broadside and threw two hundred and seventy-four pounds of metal from it. The "relative force" of the two ships was as "twelve to ten;" the damage done to each was not quite as one hundred to nothing, because the *Peacock* did get a bad cut in the fore-yard and the *Epervier* was not quite destroyed. Perhaps the reader will find amusement and even instruction in considering what the relative damage of the two ships really was.

After the British flag was hauled down the Yankee sailors made haste to repair the captured ship and by nightfall had her sails spread in a run for Savannah in company with the *Peacock*. En route to that port a British frigate chased the two, but the *Peacock* drew her off and then outsailed her. The *Epervier* was

carried into Savannah on May 1st, and on the 4th, the *Peacock* arrived. As the reader will remember the *Adams* happened to be in port at this time. The *Epervier* proved a very rich prize to the victorious crew, for in addition to the $120,000 in coin (James would reduce it to $118,000) the Government bought in the prize for $55,000. The *Epervier* was built in 1812.

It is worth telling that in breadth and depth

LEWIS WARRINGTON DUX NAVALIS AMERI
PRO PATRIA PARATUS AUT VINCERE AUT MORI
INTER PEACOCK NAV. AMERI
ET EPERVIE NAV. ANG.
DIE XXIX MAR
MDCCCXIV

Medal awarded to Lewis Warrington after the capture of the *Epervier* by the *Peacock*.

the *Peacock* and *Epervier* were exactly alike—32 × 14 feet. The *Peacock*, however, was 118 feet long, while the *Epervier* was 107. There are whole fleets of Yankee schooners in this day bigger than either—plenty that can carry more cargo than both put together—which are nevertheless called small coasters; of such a character has been the development of modern ship building.

The *Epervier* was brought into port by Lieu-

tenant John B. Nicholson. Congress voted a gold medal to Warrington and the usual silver medals and swords to the other officers. Nicholson was transferred to the *Siren*, of which something will be told presently. The *Peacock* sailed on another cruise on June 4th. Crossing the Banks of Newfoundland she cruised on the coasts of Ireland for a time and then sailed to the Bay of Biscay and finally back via the Barbadoes to New York, where she arrived on October 29, 1814. In all she took fourteen merchantmen, most of them on the Irish coast. They were manned by one hundred and forty-eight men and they were valued at $1,493,000. She was distinctly a lucky ship.

An interesting little story showing somewhat of sailors' superstitions is told of Lieutenant John B. Nicholson, who brought the *Epervier* into port. He was transferred to the little sixteen-gun brig *Siren*, of which Lieutenant George Parker was commander, and she was sent to cruise on the coast of Africa. Off the Canaries Parker died, and after putting his body into a coffin it was put overboard with the usual funeral services. The coffin sank out of sight, but as soon as the brig filled away on her course the coffin came to the surface, where it floated like a cork.

Knowing that this event, though due entirely

to the carpenter's failure to properly weight the coffin, was regarded as an ill omen by the seamen, Lieutenant Nicholson, who was now captain by right of succession, called the men to the capstan and let them decide whether to continue the cruise, or return to port. They decided, with cheers, to cruise on.

For a time everything seemed to go well. An English frigate was dodged by hanging out false lights on a raft of casks. Two English merchantmen were taken and destroyed, but in the Senegal River another one escaped after the brig had given her a broadside, and about two months after leaving home the *Siren* fell in with the British liner *Medway*. Anchors, cables, guns, and shot were thrown overboard, but she was taken after all. It was a disastrous cruise.

CHAPTER IV

MYSTERY OF THE LAST WASP

A TYPICAL NEW ENGLAND YANKEE CREW—YOUTHFUL HAYMAKERS AND WOOD-CHOPPERS—SEA-SICK FOR A WEEK—FROM FLAILS TO CUTLASSES, FROM PITCHFORKS TO BOARDING-PIKES, FROM A NIGHT-WATCH AT A DEER-LICK TO A NIGHT BATTLE WITH THE BRITISH—AFTER BRITISH COMMERCE IN BRITISH IN-SHORE WATERS—MET BY THE BRITISH SLOOP-OF-WAR *REINDEER*—MAGNIFICENT PLUCK OF THE BRITISH CAPTAIN WITH A CREW THAT WAS "THE PRIDE OF PLYMOUTH"—SHOT TO PIECES IN EIGHTEEN MINUTES—A LINER THAT COULD NOT CATCH HER—WONDERFUL NIGHT BATTLE WITH THE *AVON*—SHOOTING MEN FROM THE ENEMY'S TOPS AS RACCOONS ARE SHOT FROM TREE-TOPS—THE ENEMY'S WATER-LINE LOCATED BY DRIFTING FOAM—NOT CAPTURED BUT DESTROYED—THE MYSTERY.

WELL-MANNED, but ill-fated at the last, were all the Yankee *Wasps*. They were swift of wing for their day, and the pain of their stings still rankles. But the first, the little Baltimore clipper of eight guns, was burned at Philadelphia to keep her out of the hands of the British invaders. The second, she that deluged the decks of the British brig *Frolic* with blood, was captured by a British liner, and then with a British crew sailed from port and never returned. The story of the third shall now be told.

She was a beautiful ship, a sloop-of-war called

large and heavy in that day. Like her sister ships, the *Peacock* and the *Frolic*, of whose deeds something was told in the last chapter, she was designed to outsail and outweigh, and so conquer with ease, the sloops-of-war of the British navy. Her keel was stretched on blocks beside that of her sister, the *Frolic*, at Portsmouth, New Hampshire. On the day the *Epervier*, the first prize of her sister, the *Peacock*, reached Savannah on May 1, 1814, the new *Wasp* winged her way through the British blockaders that lay off Whaleback Reef, and headed away to the east, bound for the coast of England.

No finer crew by nature than that of the *Wasp* ever sailed from any port. She was commanded by Master-Commandant Johnston Blakeley, of Wilmington, North Carolina. He had not in any way especially distinguished himself thus far in the war, but that no mistake was made in giving him the command was evident later on. First Lieutenant James Reilly and Third Lieutenant Frederick Baury had served in the *Constitution* when she captured both the *Guerrière* and the *Java*, while Second Lieutenant T. G. Tillinghast was the second lieutenant of the *Enterprise* when she whipped the *Boxer*. Of the younger officers not a man but was worthy of his place, and as for the crew they were to a man Americans, and almost all

Johnston Blakeley.

From an engraving by Gimbrede.

of them Yankees of the Yankees—the typical New Englanders whose drawling, nasal style of speech has for time out of mind served English writers as an abundant source of amusement. That they talked about the "keows" and the "critters" need not be doubted. They were young haymakers and wood-choppers—

very likely more than one-half of them were from the farms. As one of her officers wrote they were men "whose ages average only twenty-three years. The greatest part (are) so green, that is, unaccustomed to the sea, that they were sick for a week." But that some of them had looked through the sights of a rifle at running deer, to the destruction of the deer, is also certain, as will appear farther on, and the back that could swing a scythe could lend vigor to the stroke of a cutlass or the lunge of a boarding-pike. They were not only good physically but mentally. They were from the "deestrict" schools, on one hand, and from "teown meetin'" on the other—they had common school educations, and they were independent-minded voters, while the traditions which their fathers had told them before the wide fireplaces of their log-cabin homes were of the deeds done along shore by British naval officers, beginning with that of the infamous Mowatt when nearby Portland (Falmouth) was burned in winter, and ending, very likely, when John Deguyo was taken by a press-gang from a Portland coaster when she was in the waters of New York Harbor. Unaccustomed to the sea they certainly were, but under such officers as they had, the training of a very few weeks served to fit them to meet "the pride of Plymouth" with honor to the gridiron flag. By the time

the *Wasp* was in the mouth of the English Channel, the crew had forgotten their seasickness; they had learned that the stroke of the flail was not quite the best for a cutlass, though a pitchfork thrust was good enough for a boarding-pike. The men who had been accustomed to down the running deer and moose found no difficulty in hitting a target with either great gun or musket, even though the deck heaved and fell beneath their feet or their "roosting places" in the tops swayed through wide angles.

For a time the uncertainty as to the character of each ship sighted served to train their nerves, as the work of boarding the merchant ships, which were the only ones seen for a time, gave them experiences of another kind, and then came the day of trial—their first taste of blood.

It was on June 28, 1814. The early morning was dark and gloomy, but at 4.15 o'clock two sails were seen, and the *Wasp* spread all her canvas to a light northeast breeze and went slipping down for a look at them. A little later a new sail hove in sight on the weather beam and Captain Blakeley hauled up to look at her before pursuing the other two farther; for he was in the mouth of the English Channel and British warships of all sizes haunted all that region. The stranger was coming down for a look at the *Wasp*, and as she was plainly not a frigate the *Wasp* held up to meet her. And

then, at 10 o'clock, the stranger hoisted English colors with private signals that Blakeley could not answer.

Thereafter the Yankee crew hauled and eased away and tacked in the hope of getting the weather gage of the enemy, but all in vain, for she was a handy brig and her captain was as able a seaman as was Captain Blakeley. Seeing this, at last, Captain Blakeley gave it up, and at 1.50 o'clock fired a gun to windward and hoisted the American flag. Instantly the stranger answered the challenge, and easing off her sheets she bore down upon the *Wasp*.

It was a gentle breeze that wafted her down over the greasy, dull-gray seas, but at 3.15 o'clock she was less than sixty yards away on the port (weather) quarter of the *Wasp*, and with a short twelve-pounder mounted on her forecastle she opened fire with both solid shot and grape. For eleven minutes her crew worked this gun while the Yankees stood at their stations in silence—the British fired five charges of shot and grape into the deck of the *Wasp* while the New England backwoodsmen under a Tarheel captain eyed the blasts unflinchingly. The Tarheel Blakeley had been waiting for the enemy to draw nearer. At 3.26 o'clock she had done so to his satisfaction, and shoving down his helm he luffed up as if to cross her bows and opened fire as his guns began to bear—the

backwoods gunners had a target more than one hundred feet long lying less than sixty feet away. It was their first live sea target. They were not quite so firm-nerved as they were later —but for eight minutes they worked their guns with an energy and skill that were simply stunning, while the enemy with equal energy replied.

"The concussions of the explosions almost deadened what little way the vessels had on" —almost but not quite, and Blakeley hauled up his mainsail lest he cross the enemy's bow too soon. The smoke rose up in huge volumes above the loftiest sails and rolled away in bulging clouds on every side, but the men at the great guns of the *Wasp*, peering through the sulphurous fog, hurled their shot with unerring accuracy, while those that were perched in the tops used their muskets to pick off the officers of the enemy, first of all.

It was a desperate struggle, but the weight of metal, as well as the superiority of marksmanship was found with the American crew. They had opened fire at 3.26 P.M., and at 3.34 P.M. the enemy's sails had been so damaged that the *Wasp's* mainsail was hauled up lest she drift clear across the stranger's bow. And then for six minutes more the Yankees drove their shot through the splintering walls of the enemy "when, in consequence of her unmanageable

state," she "fell foul of the *Wasp*." So says Allen, and so was the fact. "And in this position (she) became exposed to a destructive raking fire."

But though disabled, the enemy was not yet conquered. Her captain had, early in the fight, been cut through the calves of both legs by a musket-ball that made a most painful wound.

The *Wasp* and *Reindeer*.

From a wood-cut in the "Naval Monument."

Of course, he stood to his post. And then, as his ship was fouling the *Wasp*, a grape shot—a round iron ball more than two inches in diameter—pierced both thighs. He fell to his knees, but he struggled up and, sword in hand, cheered on his men, and then calling away boarders he ran forward to lead them, and was climbing into the rigging when two musket-balls, fired simultaneously from the maintop of the *Wasp*, struck him in the top of the head and passed

down through to come out beneath his chin. "Placing one hand to his forehead and with the other convulsively brandishing his sword, he exclaimed 'Oh God!' and dropped lifeless on his own deck."

The end had come. The British seamen recoiled, as their leader fell, and Blakeley's men who had gathered to repel boarders now boarded in turn and swept the crew of the shattered ship into her hold. It was exactly 3.44 P.M. and twenty-nine minutes had passed since the first gun was fired by the enemy, and but eighteen since the *Wasp* returned the fire.

And then the Yankees learned that they had captured the British brig-sloop *Reindeer*, commanded by Captain William Manners. "The captain's clerk, *the highest officer left*, surrendered the brig." Her captain and purser were dead; her first (and only) lieutenant and sailing-master were wounded. So were one midshipman, a boatswain and a master's mate. Whether she had other midshipmen is not stated—probably she had none.

In this action between the *Wasp* and the *Reindeer* we have, at last, after describing a year's fighting, a British crew of which British writers speak well. That they do so only because the *Reindeer's* armament and the number of her crew were much under the *Wasp* is not to be doubted. Nevertheless it is a pleas-

ure to note that James is willing to write that "the British crew had long served together, and were called the pride of Plymouth," but he states their number as consisting of "ninety-eight men and twenty boys." No crew ever fought more bravely than they did until Captain Manners fell; and when he was down they yielded exactly as did the crew of the Yankee *Argus* when her captain was shot down.

Being assured that the *Reindeer* had the best of British crews, we can form an estimate of their skill by considering the damage which they were able to do to the *Wasp* during the twenty-nine minutes they were firing at her—firing at a range that varied from sixty yards down to a point where the ships touched each other—a range which for eighteen minutes was under sixty feet.

With nine short twenty-fours in their broadside and one short twelve on a high pivot what damage does the uninformed reader suppose that this one of the ablest of British crews—a crew that could and did load and fire their guns every two minutes—was able to do? They hulled the Yankee with six round shot and put another in the foremast. They fired at least eighty-six shots at the Yankee—a target that was one hundred feet long, eight or ten feet high, and for eighteen minutes less than sixty

feet away—and yet only seven struck home. With their grape, and their musketry, fired when the ships were grinding together, they killed and mortally wounded eleven Yankees and severely or slightly wounded fifteen more.

On the other hand, the Yankees had not "long served together." Most of them were landsmen who were seasick for a week on leaving port. And yet because of native ability they had been easily trained; they stood in si-

Medal Awarded to Johnston Blakeley after the Capture of the *Reindeer* by the *Wasp*.

lence under fire for five shots, and in this, their first battle, they aimed their guns so accurately that "the hull of the *Reindeer* was literally cut to pieces and her masts were in a tottering state." This quotation is from Allen. The fact is that she was so badly cut to pieces in the wake of her gun-ports that it was impossible to tell how many Yankee shots did strike her hull. A breeze that sprang up the next day at once toppled the foremast overboard,

and, in short, she was so badly injured that she could not be carried into either of the nearby French ports, and she was accordingly fired and blown to pieces. The British lost, in killed and mortally wounded thirty-three, and in wounded thirty-four, "nearly all severely."

The *Wasp* measured 509 tons to the *Reindeer* 477. She fired eleven guns, throwing 315 pounds of metal to a broadside, where the *Reindeer* fired ten guns throwing 210 pounds of metal to a broadside. The *Wasp* had a crew of 173, mostly landsmen, who had been together less than two months; the *Reindeer* had 118 who were "the pride of Plymouth."

While nothing that is written here can add to the fame of Captain Manners, of the *Reindeer*, it may be said that Anglo-Saxon republicans are proud of his skill, and are thrilled by the story of his magnificent gallantry just as the Anglo-Saxon nominal-monarchists are.

Having destroyed the *Reindeer*, Blakeley sailed with the *Wasp* to L'Orient, France, the port where of old the Yankee cruisers had refitted after cruising against British commerce in the English Channel. *En route*, three days after the battle, a number of the wounded prisoners were put on a Portuguese brig, called the *Lisbon Packet*, and sent to Plymouth.

The *Wasp* was detained at L'Orient until

August 27th, refitting, and then she got away to continue her work on the high seas. It was her luck to fall in with another British brig-sloop, within four days—a sloop like the *Reindeer*—and few, if any, more instructive pages of history can be found than those that compare the two actions which the *Wasp* had with these vessels of the class she was designed to destroy with ease.

The second brig-sloop to meet her fate under the guns of the *Wasp* was the *Avon*, "commander the Honourable James Arbuthnot," and the battle was fought on September 1, 1814.

That was a most interesting day in the lives of the *Wasp's* crew. To begin the day they fell in with a fleet of ten merchantmen, guarded by the big seventy-four-gun British liner *Armada* and a bomb ship. The liner was an average ship of her class, but the lively *Wasp* dashed boldly into the fleet and cut out the brig *Mary* loaded with cannon captured from the Spaniards and other military stores.

Having effectually fired the *Mary*, the *Wasp* tried for another, but the *Armada* chased her away this time and she went hunting other game, and found it.

The covey included a fleet of four vessels, of which, as the event showed, three were British brig-sloops of the class of the beaten *Reindeer*,

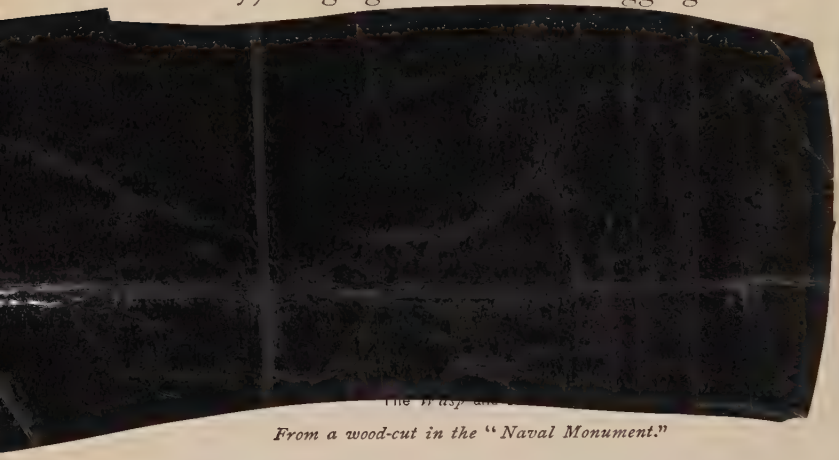
and a merchantman that had been recaptured from a Yankee privateer. The vessels were rather widely separated, one of them, the *Castilian* by name, having gone in chase of the privateer. What another of the brig sloops, the *Tartarus*, was doing is not told in any printed account, while the third, which was the *Avon*, Captain Arbuthnot, had started with the *Castilian* in chase of the Yankee priv[illegible] enough to [illegible] for action. [illegible] run away having been made by the *Avon*—on the contrary she fired a shot from her stern chaser—the *Wasp* had arrived close on her port quarter by 9.20 o'clock when one of the officers of the *Avon* shouted :

"What ship is that?" Captain Blakeley replied by repeating the question. Again the *Avon* hailed, when Blakeley replied :

"Heave to and I'll let you know who I am," and then fired the little twelve-pounder he had

taken from the forecastle of the captured *Reindeer*. At that the *Avon* set her foretopmast studding sail and began firing her stern chaser.

Fearing she might escape, Captain Blakeley put up his helm, ran down under the *Avon's* lee, and as he ranged up under her quarter, gave her a raking broadside of bar shot and (presumably) langrage that set her rigging adrift



From a wood-cut in the "Naval Monument."

in every direction. Another broadside of these projectiles was still more effective, for it brought down the fore-and-aft mainsail of the *Avon*, and it fell over the lee guns abaft the mainmast —the guns that bore on the *Wasp*—and for the time, put them entirely out of action, while her speed was materially diminished.

It was a moonless night, but the crew of the *Wasp* "could see through the smoke and gloom

of the night the black hull of the *Avon* as she surged through the waters; and aloft, against the sky, the sailors could be discerned, clustering in the tops."

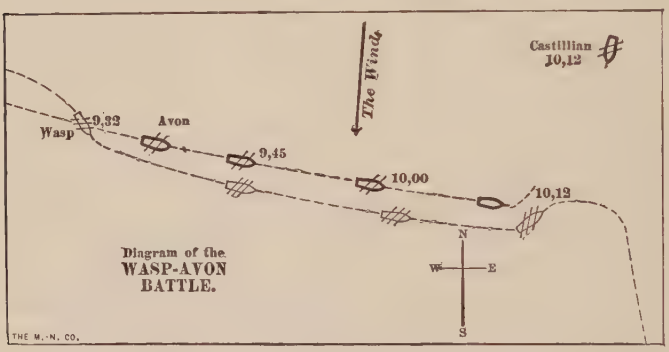
No backwoods gunner would ask for a better target than was then afforded by the enemy. With their rifles the Yankee marksmen began to pick the British sailors from the *Avon's* tops as they had shot raccoons from the tree crotch, while those behind the great guns loaded with ball as the *Wasp* ran through her lee, and aiming at the white line which the smoother and spoondrift drew along the bow and waist of the *Avon's* black hull, they fired with unerring precision. They had been under fire—they were veterans now, though but three months on board ship.

Meantime the crew of the *Avon* had returned the fire furiously—after the manner of the British sailors of that day. Their manner of fighting was described by Lord Howard Douglas as "uncircumspect gallantry." The same author describes the handling of the *Wasp* and of her guns with the words "wary caution."

As the Yankees with "wary caution" fired their second or third broadside of round shot, the mainmast of the *Avon* fell over the rail, and her fire gradually died away while the men of the *Wasp* with unabated vigor worked their guns. At 10 o'clock the fire of the *Avon* ceased

altogether, and Captain Blakeley hailed to ask her if she had struck. In reply the *Avon* opened a feeble fire and for twelve minutes more the Yankee gunners continued their deadly work, when the *Avon* being again silent, Blakeley once more hailed, and this time had the satisfaction of learning that the enemy had struck.

An appalling work had been done, for it was the work chiefly of men who had in themselves



never suffered visible wrong at the hands of the British. They had never been enslaved by a press-gang. They had never felt the lash of the cat. They struck at the enemy because of an inherited hatred—rather because of a hatred that came to them through tradition—and every blow struck home.

After the *Avon* struck, the luck of the *Wasp* turned. As the crew of the small boat were lowering it to the water in order to go

over and take possession of the *Avon*, a new enemy appeared. The boat was at once hoisted in and the drums beat to quarters. Then the *Wasp* was sent away before the wind while the topmen hurried aloft to reeve off new rigging in place of some that had been shot away. A few minutes sufficed, but before everything was quite ready two more ships were seen bearing down and Blakeley wrote: "I felt myself compelled to forego the satisfaction of destroying the prize."

As a matter of fact he had already destroyed her, as we learn from the reports of the ships of the enemy. The first of the vessels to come to the aid of the *Avon* was the *Castilian*. She bore down on the quarter of the *Wasp* and fired one broadside which whistled harmlessly over the *Wasp's* quarter-deck. Then she tacked around and hastened back to the *Avon*, for the *Avon* was firing guns and making other signals of distress. The survivors of her crew were working desperately at the pumps and with plugs to stop the leaks, and the crew of the *Castilian* and those of the *Tartarus* as well came to their aid. But neither the strength of the men at the pumps nor the skill of the carpenters could avail to undo the work of the Yankee backwoodsmen done during the few minutes—perhaps twenty—that the *Wasp* lay on the *Avon's* lee bow. At 11.55 the work

of transferring the *Avon's* crew began and at 1 o'clock the next morning, as the last boat was leaving her, the *Avon's* bow sank down under water, her stern rose high in air, and down she went.

As it seems to a student of naval history at the end of the nineteenth century, it is both interesting and instructive to compare the *Reindeer* battle with the *Avon* battle. For while the Yankee crew in the first battle ruined the *Reindeer*, she was still able to float. She was cut to pieces in the wake of her ports and comparatively few shot struck the water-line or under. But in this battle with the *Avon* they had so far improved in their skill with great guns, that, although there was now a rolling sea and it was night, they were, nevertheless, able to shoot so many holes into her at the water-line and below it that all the efforts of three crews could not save her.

The men of the *Wasp*, though their story ends in a mystery, yet speak to their countrymen. For their battles proved that *the first requisite of a sea power is the ability to strike.* As long as the American people can reach out with good ships carrying good guns manned by clear-eyed marksmen, they shall have peace.

The *Wasp* was struck by four round shot in the course of the battle, and these killed two

men. A wad from one of her guns that was aimed too high, hit a third man and hurt him some.

We have only the account of the favorite British naval history from which to obtain the number of the crew of the *Avon* and her losses. He puts it at "one hundred and four men and thirteen boys." He says she lost ten killed and thirty-two wounded. It is worth while giving James's opinion of the matter. He says:

"The gallantry of the *Avon's* officers and crew cannot for a moment be questioned; but the gunnery of the latter appears to have been not one whit better than, to the discredit of the British navy, had frequently before been displayed in combats of this kind. Nor, judging from the specimen given by the *Castilian*, is it likely that she would have performed any better."

Roosevelt figures that the *Wasp* used twelve guns firing 327 pounds of metal to the *Avon's* eleven throwing 280 pounds. The crews are set down at 160 to 117 and the relative force at fourteen to eleven in favor of the Yankees, the loss of men being as forty-two to three. Then he adds:

"It is self-evident that in the case of this action the odds, fourteen to eleven, are neither enough to account for the loss inflicted, being as fourteen to one, nor for the rapidity with

which, during a night encounter, the *Avon* was placed in a sinking condition."

After the night battle the *Wasp* ran with a free sheet and a favoring current away to the south and west. A merchantman was captured on the 12th, and another on the 14th. On the 21st she took the *Atalanta*, of eight guns, that had been a Baltimore privateer named *Siro*—"a beautiful brig of two hundred and fifty-three tons, coppered to the bends and copper fastened, and has a very valuable cargo on board, consisting of brandy, wines, cambrics, etc." So wrote one of the *Wasp's* officers. The *Atalanta* was manned and placed under the command of Midshipman David Geisinger. All the crew wrote letters to their friends, and Captain Blakeley sent in her his official report of the battle with the *Avon*. Then the *Atalanta* sailed for home, reaching Savannah on November 4, 1814, and the letters she carried were the last ever received from any member of the crew of the *Wasp*.

Yet a brief glimpse of her subsequent career was found in the log of the Swedish bark *Adonis*. As the reader will recall, the gallant crew of the *Essex* had for the most part arrived in New York under parole on the *Essex Junior*. There were two, however, Lieutenant Stephen Decatur McKnight and Master's-Mate Lyman, who were landed at Rio Janeiro by

the *Phœbe*, and these started for home on the Swedish bark *Adonis*, but they did not arrive, and when the time of their absence grew long, their friends made inquiry. The *Adonis* had arrived, though without publicly reporting anything about her passengers, but when her log was searched the following entry was found:

"Oct. 9th. In lat. 18° 35′ N., long. 30° 10′ W., sea account, at 8 o'clock in the morning, discovered a strange sail giving chase to us, and fired several guns; she gaining very fast. At half-past 10 o'clock hove to, and was boarded by an officer dressed in an English doctor's uniform, the vessel also hoisted an English ensign. The officer proceeded to examine my ship's papers, &c., &c., likewise the letter bags, and took from one of them a letter to the victualling office, London. Finding I had two American officers as passengers, he immediately left the ship, and went on board the sloop-of-war; he shortly after returned, took the American gentlemen with him, and went a second time on board the sloop. In about half an hour, he returned again with Messrs. McKnight and Lyman, and they informed me that the vessel was the United States sloop-of-war, the *Wasp*, commanded by Captain Bleaky, or Blake, last from France, where she had refitted; had lately sunk the *Reindeer*, English sloop of war, and another vessel which sunk without their

being able to save a single person, or learn the vessel's name—that Messrs. McKnight and Lyman had now determined to leave me, and go on board the *Wasp*—paid me their passage in dollars, at 5*s.* 9*d.*, and having taken their luggage on board the *Wasp*, they made sail to the southward. Shortly after they had left, I found that Lieutenant McKnight had left his writing-desk behind; and I immediately made signal for the *Wasp* to return, and stood toward her; they, observing my signals, stood back, came alongside, and sent their boat on board for the writing-desk; after which they sent me a log line, and some other presents, and made all sail in a direction for the line; and I have reason to suppose for the convoy that passed on Thursday previous."

The above is quoted by Cooper. It locates the *Wasp* say two hundred miles about northwest of the Cape de Verde Islands. Cooper adds:

"There is a rumor that an English frigate went into Cadiz, much crippled and with a very severe loss of men, about this time, and that she reported her injuries to have been received in an engagement with a heavy American corvette, the latter disappearing so suddenly in the night, that it was thought she had sunk.

"There is only one other rumor in reference

to this ship that has any appearance of probability. There is little doubt that Captain Blakeley intended to run down toward the Spanish Main, and to pass through the West Indies, in order to go into a southern port according to his orders. It is said that two English frigates chased an American sloop-of-war, off the southern coast, about the time the *Wasp* ought to have arrived, and that the three ships were struck with a heavy squall, in which the sloop-of-war suddenly disappeared. There is nothing surprising in a vessel of that size being capsized in a squall, especially when carrying sail hard to escape enemies.

"She was a good ship, as well manned and as ably commanded as any vessel in our little navy; and it may be doubted if there was at that time any foreign sloop-of-war of her size and strength that could have stood against her in fair fight."

During the last cruise made by the *Constitution* in the War of 1812 she was caught in a hurricane and strained so that she leaked badly, and at the last the carpenter, after sounding her well and finding the water gaining rapidly, went to Lieutenant Shubrick, the officer of the deck, and said:

"Sir, the ship is sinking."

"Well, sir," replied Shubrick, "as everything in our power is made tight, we must patiently

submit to the fate of sailors, and all of us sink or swim together."

The *Constitution* did not sink, but the words of the gallant Shubrick show us how the Yankee crew of the *Wasp* met their fate.

CHAPTER V

ON THE UPPER LAKES IN 1814

AN EXPEDITION INTO LAKE HURON—THE BRITISH HAD THE BEST OF IT IN THE END—GALLANT ACTION OF A BRITISH COMMANDER AT THE HEAD OF THE NIAGARA RIVER—CAUTIOUS CAPTAIN CHAUNCEY AS A KNIGHT OF THE WHIP-SAW, ADZE AND MAUL—HIS EQUALLY PRUDENT OPPONENT—BRITISH TORPEDOES THAT FAILED—WHEN A THOUSAND MEN SUPPORTED BY SEVEN SHIPS ARMED WITH ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-ONE CANNON "WITH GREAT GALLANTRY" ROUTED THREE HUNDRED YANKEES AT OSWEGO—SUPPLIES THE BRITISH DID NOT GET—A NAVAL FLOTILLA CAUGHT IN BIG SANDY CREEK—CHAUNCEY AFLOAT ON THE LAKE—GALLANT YOUNG AMERICAN OFFICERS—LINE OF BATTLE-SHIPS THAT WERE NEVER LAUNCHED.

THE story of the deeds of the American naval sailors on the fresh-water seas during 1814 may very well begin with the actions in the extreme west. The Lake Erie victory of September 10, 1813, had annihilated the British naval power west of Niagara Falls, and no attempt to build another British fleet there has been made since that day. Nevertheless, in 1814, there were British successes afloat on both Lake Huron and Lake Erie that showed at once the resourcefulness and bravery of the British officers and

men—that proved they were still able to damage the Yankee cause even if without shipping.

As the reader will remember, Perry, when operating on Lake Erie, was subordinate to, though fortunately not under the immediate supervision of, Captain Chauncey, who made his headquarters at Sackett's Harbor. It would have been fortunate for the American cause had Perry superseded Chauncey, but he was brought to the Atlantic instead, where circumstances prevented his accomplishing anything, while Captain Arthur Sinclair was sent to take charge of the American fleet west of the Niagara, and that region was made an independent station—Sinclair was responsible only to the Navy Department. Sinclair had first seen active service as a midshipman in the *Constellation* along with Macdonough, under Truxton, when the French frigate *Insurgent* was whipped. He next appeared in history as the captain of the brig *Argus* that sailed with the squadron of Rodgers—a squadron of which the *United States* was a member, and that was the cruise when the *Macedonian* was captured. The *Argus* took five merchantmen and reached port in safety—it was something to the credit of an American captain to bring in his ship when one remembers the overwhelming naval force the British kept on the western side of the Atlantic.

Aside from keeping watch over the enemy's coast of the great lakes to see that no more warships were built there, Sinclair had but one thing to do really worth doing, and that was to recapture the important frontier trading post of Mackinaw that the British had surprised on the morning of July 17, 1812, and with an overwhelming force captured without resistance. The American garrison had not even heard that war had been declared! Besides retaking Mackinaw, the Americans wished to destroy some union posts occupied by the British, and damage the British fur trading company as much as possible, because the company's officials had been the active and efficient agents of the British Government in securing the aid of the western savages with their scalping-knives for attacks on the American settlements.

With the *Niagara*, the *Caledonia*, the *Ariel*, the *Scorpion*, and the *Tigress*, Captain Sinclair sailed into Lake Huron late in July, carrying along nearly one thousand soldiers including some militia.

On July 20, 1814, the fleet reached the trading post of St. Joseph's, in what may be called the northwest corner of Lake Huron. Everything of value there was destroyed, including a small fort. Then a number of men went on to Sault Sainte Marie, at the head of the rapids, at the outlet of Lake Superior. This was the

chief post of the British fur company, and it was burned. The *Perseverance*, a small vessel belonging to the company, was fired by the company's agent as he fled. The Americans extinguished the flames, but lost the vessel on the rocks as they were bringing her through the rapids.

Then the fleet sailed to Mackinaw, only to find that the guns of the ships could not reach

up to the hill-top fort, and that the number of American trpoos was inferior to the garrison of the island. An assault was made, but the Americans were repulsed with considerable loss.

Sailing thence, Captain Sinclair went to the Nautawassaga River, where he destroyed a blockhouse, and found the fur company's schooner *Nancy* had been burned by the British lieutenant in charge.

Then Sinclair returned to Detroit, leaving the schooner *Tigress*, Captain Champlin, and the *Scorpion*, Captain Turner, to blockade the Nautawassaga, for that was the route by which supplies were carried to the British force at Mackinaw. For a time this duty was done efficiently, and food really became scarce at Mackinaw, but blockading is dull work, vigilance was relaxed, and on September 3, 1814, the British began their work of revenging the assaults of the squadron. The watchful British scouts found that the two Yankee schooners were posted fifteen miles or more apart. So a force of twenty sailors and seventy-two soldiers got into four boats and at 9 P.M—and a very dark night at that—they made a dash at the *Tigress*. They were within fifty yards of her when first seen. The captain fired his long twenty-four at them, with no effect, and then mustered his crew at the rail to repel boarders. But he had only twenty-eight men to the enemy's ninety-two. The Americans fought bravely, killed three seamen, and wounded a Lieutenant Bulger, who commanded the enemy, and seven of his soldiers, besides wounding several seamen who were not enumerated by Bulger. Then the *Tigress* surrendered. The captured Americans were set on shore, and on September 5th, the captured *Tigress*, with her American colors flying, got within ten yards of

the *Scorpion* when the concealed British soldiers jumped up, poured a volley into the unsuspecting Yankees on the *Scorpion*, and then carried her by assault. The British authorities strove to magnify this victory to the utmost. They not only conceded that Champlin bravely defended his vessel—the British Adjutant-General published a general order announcing to the world that the vessels "had a crew of three hundred men each." The vessels "were valued by the proper officers at £16,000 sterling." So says Allen. It was a lucky affair for the ninety-two.

Meantime a gallant party of British seamen had done still better down at the foot of Lake Erie—rather in the head of Niagara River. Three little American schooners, the *Ohio*, the *Somers*, and the *Porcupine*, were lying off Fort Erie on the Canada side, which was then in the possession of the Americans. That these vessels were lying in perfect security their crews could very well believe, because the British did not have even a row-boat anywhere in that vicinity. Nevertheless, when feeling most secure, two of them were captured and the third escaped only because the current of the river swept the enemy down stream so rapidly that they passed her before ready to attack.

On the night of August 12, 1814, Captain Alexander Dobbs of the British brig *Charwell*

and Lieutenant Coplestone Radcliffe of the British brig *Netly*, two vessels which were lying at the head of Lake Ontario, started with seventy-five seamen and marines to carry the *Charwell's* gig overland to Lake Erie. By relieving one another the men carried the gig twenty miles (from Queenstown to Frenchman's Creek). There they were joined by a body of Canadian militia, with the aid of whom they carried five big flat-bottomed scows, together with the gig, for eight miles more to the beach of Lake Erie, where all six boats were launched and filled with armed men. So expeditiously was this work done that soon after 11 P. M. this little fleet was within hail of the Yankee schooner *Somers*. When the anchor watch on her deck asked who they were, they replied:

"Provision boats."

Provision boats were frequently allowed to pass at night, and the watch on the *Somers* were entirely deceived. A moment later the British were upon her, a volley of musketry was fired that wounded two of the watch, her cable was cut, and away she went fairly in possession of the enemy.

The *Ohio* was next in line, and the British were soon around her, but her crew had come tumbling on deck at the sound of the muskets. They made a right good fight, too, considering

the circumstances, for Lieutenant Conkling, who commanded the Yankee squadron, Sailing-Master M. Cally, and one seaman were shot down, and four more were wounded, while the British lost Lieutenant Radcliffe and one sailor killed and six wounded. But each of these little vessels had a crew of only thirty all told, and the British force coming on in such a fashion necessarily triumphed.

Certainly this was one of the most gallant actions of the whole war on the lakes; the enterprise of the British officers in getting afloat was most remarkable. But it is nowhere recorded that they got any such a sum of prize-money as was given to the men who, with far less risk and far less enterprise, took the *Tigress* and *Scorpion*. Allen says the *Porcupine* was unmolested because the current swept the conquering host down-stream too rapidly to permit an attack. This is probably true; that is to say, before the *Ohio's* crew had surrendered the whole fleet of boats and the two captured vessels had been swept below the *Porcupine*, and it was impossible to return. The number of militia taking part in the assault is not given.

Although they had nothing worth mention afloat on the upper lakes, the honors there for 1814 were with the British.

On Lake Ontario the contest during 1814 was made with whip-saw, adze, and maul rather

than with guns, powder, and shot. The British under the braggart, Sir James Yeo, at Kingston, and the Americans under the over-cautious Captain Chauncey, at Sackett's Harbor, "had been bending all their energies during the preceding winter in making preparations for securing the command of Lake Ontario." The side that could get the greater number of guns afloat was certain, under the circumstances, to win. "As soon as one, by building, acquired the superiority, the foe at once retired to port, where he waited until he had built another vessel or two, when he came out, and the other went into port in turn."

The building at Sackett's Harbor began in February; two twenty-two-gun brigs were laid down under the names of *Jefferson* and *Jones*, and a huge frigate, the *Superior*, which was at first designed to carry fifty guns, but was lengthened to accommodate sixty-two, when a deserter came in from Kingston and described the largest ship that Sir James Yeo was building. "The *Jefferson* was launched on April 7th, the *Jones* on the 10th, and the *Superior* on May 2d." She had been eighty days only on the stocks, which shows that Mr. Henry Eckford, the master ship-builder, was a great man in the craft. He did it, too, in spite of sickness in camp that "almost assumed the proportions of a plague."

Meantime, however, the Canadians over at Kingston had done better in this that they had an efficient number of ships ready for sea by the first of May, although it was near the end of the season before they spread their canvas on their big line-of-battle ship, which the *Superior* was designed to match. By getting his squadron out on the lake first, Sir James Yeo obtained an opportunity of which he failed to take full advantage, as will appear farther on.

But before he sailed he tried to blow some of the Yankee ships at Sackett's Harbor out of water by means of torpedoes, and this is probably the first effort made by the British to use this class of weapons against the Americans. It was on the night of April 25, 1814. "Lieutenant Dudley, while out with two guard-boats, discovered there three others in Black River Bay. Not answering his hail, he fired. They fled. On searching, six barrels of gunpowder were found, each containing a fuse." They were slung in pairs by ropes and it was supposed that venturesome sailors intended to swim into the harbor with them and attach them to the vessels afloat and, after firing the fuse, swim away to safety.

To fully understand what a great opportunity Sir James Yeo had when he got his ships out on the lake ahead of Chauncey one must recall the fact that all of the supplies for the

Yankee fleet—sails and rigging, guns and ammunition—had to be brought from New York City, and the route included the Hudson and Mohawk Rivers to where Rome now stands, where everything was carried overland to the head of navigation in Wood's Creek, and thence down that and the Oswego River to Oswego. From that port the supplies had to be conveyed by boats on the lake a distance of sixty miles to Sackett's Harbor. By commanding the lake, Sir James Yeo might shut off the supplies destined to Sackett's Harbor. As it happened, he might have done still more. He might have captured a very large part of the supplies that had been forwarded to fit out the new Yankee ships, for these supplies had reached the falls of the Oswego, twelve miles above the lake, when Sir James took Oswego. They had been forwarded when navigation in the Mohawk was good or when the snows made the sledding good on the road alongside the various streams in this inland-water route.

Sir James sailed with six ships from Kingston Harbor on May 4, 1814, and early the next morning he was off Oswego. The port was defended by a wretched little fort mounting three guns in good order, besides one that had lost its trunnions and two that were in the mud. This was garrisoned by a "battalion of less than three hundred men." The Yankee

schooner *Growler* was in port and had been loaded with seven of the long cannon sent up for Chauncey's fleet at Sackett's Harbor.

Seeing the enemy in overwhelming force the naval men sank the schooner and then went to help the garrison of the fort. The attempt of the British to land on the day of their arrival was frustrated by a gale of wind, but on the 6th the fleet was placed to cover the landing and bombard the fort. The *Princess Charlotte*, of forty-two guns — twenty-six long twenty-fours, two long sixty-eights, and fourteen short thirty-twos; the *Montreal*, of seven long twenty-fours and eighteen long eighteens, and the *Niagara*, of two long twelves and twenty short thirty-twos, were placed to fire on the fort, which had only two long twenty-fours, one long twelve, and one long six in place to return the fire. The *Charwell* and the *Star*, mounting two long twelves and fourteen short thirty-twos, were ordered to "scour the woods with grape and clear them of militia." In addition, there were a number of gunboats, but these amounted to nothing in the attack.

When the four ships with their eighty-nine guns had begun to make the air vibrate around the fort, and the two brigs with their thirty-two guns were making the bark and branches fly from the trees of the forests round about, eight hundred British soldiers were landed under

The Charwell covering the landing. *The Princess The Prince Regent.*

The Attack on Fort Oswego,
From an engraving, published in 1815, by R. Havel.

Lake Ontario, May 6, 1814.

after a drawing of Lieutenant Hewett, Royal Marines.

Lieutenant-Colonel Fischer, while two hundred sailors, armed with boarding-pikes, were sent along, under Captain Mulcaster. Covered by the fire of the four ships, mounting eighty-nine guns, and two brigs, mounting thirty-two guns, "the debarkation of the troops" was "very cleverly accomplished," according to one author; and when this was done "the soldiers and seamen behaved with great gallantry and steadiness, their officers leading them, sword in hand, up a long, steep hill." In short, by behaving "with great gallantry" this body of 1,000 men, supported by ships carrying one hundred and twenty-one guns, were able to drive Lieutenant-Colonel Mitchell and almost three hundred soldiers and sailors away from his four guns!

But in doing so they lost twenty-two killed and seventy-three wounded, including "the gallant Captain Mulcaster, dangerously." These figures are from the report of the British Colonel Fischer. The *Montreal* was "set on fire three times and much cut up in hull, masts, and rigging" by the fire of the two long twenty-fours of the fort, that were worked steadily in spite of the storm of iron fired from the British fleet. The Americans lost six killed, thirty-eight wounded, and twenty-five missing, both of these last falling into the enemy's hands."

"Mitchell then fell back unmolested to the falls, where there was a large quantity of stores. But he was not again attacked." It was here that Sir James Yeo missed his opportunity, for with his superior force he might easily have driven Mitchell still farther away, one would suppose, and at the falls were stored twenty-two long thirty-two pounder cannon, ten long twenty-fours, three short forty-twos, ten big anchor cables, and no end of other material for Chauncey's squadron, and all of this was within a month or so conveyed to Sackett's Harbor, though not without some adventure. Sir James made no effort to take it, but contented himself with raising the *Growler* with her valuable cargo, and destroying the fort and barracks.

After his victory at Oswego, Sir James Yeo refitted and then sailed to Sackett's Harbor and established a blockade that for a time was not a little annoying to the Americans, for it prevented their bringing in the war material from Oswego. However, in spite of the blockade, Master Commandant M. T. Woolsey volunteered to bring the supplies around by water as far as Stony Creek, which was but three miles from Sackett's Harbor, whence, in spite of bad roads, they could be easily brought in. Accordingly the big guns and cables were loaded on nineteen barges at

Oswego Falls, and at sunset of May 28, 1814, this little fleet rowed boldly out into the lake. The weather was thick, but the water was smooth, and fair progress was made during the night. At sunrise, next morning, the boats were obliged to put into Big Sandy Creek, which was eight miles from the harbor; that is, all but one put into this creek. The nineteenth, loaded with two long twenty-four pounder cannon and a cable, went astray in the fog and one of the British cruisers picked it up.

This seemed on the face of it very hard fortune, but in the end it proved just the reverse. Sir James, having learned from the captured crew all about the rest of the transports, sent two heavy gun-boats, three cutters, and a gig, under Captain Popham, of the *Montreal*, to capture the whole fleet. The British boat squadron carried one long thirty-two pounder, one short sixty-eight, one short thirty-two, two long twelves, and two brass sixes. The crews aggregated one hundred and eighty men.

It was on the evening of May 29, 1814, that this British flotilla arrived off the mouth of the Big Sandy. They were seen by a resident, Mr. James Otis, who hastened to inform the officers of the American fleet, and in consequence a very neat ambush was arranged.

Meantime the spreading of the news of the British invasion brought reinforcements a-plenty to the Americans—one hundred and twenty riflemen, under Major Appling; a battery of two six-pounders, under Captain George Melvin; a troop of cavalry, under Captain Harris; sixty Oneida Indians, and "some infantry." Under Woolsey's orders, the one hundred and twenty riflemen and the sixty Indians were placed in the bush near the first bend in the creek reached in coming up-stream from the lake, while the remainder of the forces took post near the flotilla of transports, to make a fight in case the ambush failed. But the ambush did not fail.

On the morning of the 30th the British rowed into the creek. "In the door of a fisherman's house (yet standing when I visited the spot in 1860) Popham saw a woman, and ordered her to have breakfast ready for himself and officers when they should return. She knew how well Woolsey was prepared to receive his pursuers, and said, significantly:

"'You'll find breakfast ready up the creek.'"

So says Lossing. "The British passed on in jolly mood up the creek"—they were jolly until they had arrived within a short distance of the first bend in the creek. Here the Yankee transports were first seen, some distance above, and the British opened fire on the transports

with solid shot, while grape and canister were fired into the brush on both sides of the creek. Having by the grape-discharges cleared the brush, as they supposed, the British landed a flanking party on each side of the creek, and these started marching up while the boats continued firing solid shot at the Yankee transports.

The opportunity of the Americans had now come, and "so furious and unexpected was the assault on front, flank, and rear that the British surrendered within ten minutes." The British "force was captured with hardly any resistance." This seems the more remarkable when it is known that the sixty Oneida Indians had been frightened away by the grape of the British and the fight was made by Appling's one hundred and twenty riflemen only. Captain Popham, commanding the British forces, reported eighteen of his men killed and fifty dangerously wounded; but Appling reported only fourteen British killed and twenty-eight wounded. This discrepancy is noteworthy; it is a right lonesome discrepancy, because rarely have the British acknowledged a greater loss than that the Americans credited them with.

The Americans had one man and one Indian slightly wounded. The number of British captured was one hundred and thirty-three aside from the wounded. The advantage of this

victory, of course, far outweighed the loss of the one transport that led to the invasion.

This blow disheartened Sir James Yeo so much that on June 6th he raised the blockade of Sackett's Harbor.

Thereafter neither the British nor the Yankee commander did anything in the way of fighting, though both were very busy superintending ship-carpenters. Sir James was eager to get a liner afloat, that was to carry one hundred guns, while Chauncey was working over his sixty-two-gun frigate. Sir James had a force afloat that was stronger than the Yankee force, but once the Yankee *Superior* was in commission, the preponderance would be the other way, and Sir James (like Chauncey) was not going to take any chances in battle unless he had the greater force. For six weeks the two squadrons lay idly in port.

Meantime, however, Lieutenant F. H. Gregory of the American navy engaged in "two very gallant cutting-out expeditions." On June 16th, with twenty-two men in three row-boats, he started away across the lake to intercept some of the enemy's provision-schooners, and on the 19th fell in with the British gun-boat *Black-snake* armed with a short eighteen-pounder and carrying eighteen men. Gregory at once carried the boat by assault without the loss of a man. He burned the boat and carried the

men into Sackett's Harbor; and then on July 1st he descended on Presqu' Isle, where he "burned a fourteen-gun schooner just ready for launching" and once more escaped without loss.

With these two incidents only to mar the calm, the time passed until July 31st, when Chauncey got clear of the port. He now had a fleet of eight vessels, of which the largest (the *Superior*) carried a crew of five hundred men, with thirty long thirty-two pounders, two long twenty-fours, and twenty-six short forty-twos. The smallest, a brig, the *Oneida*, carried one hundred men and was armed with two long twelves and fourteen short twenty-fours. As a whole the squadron measured 5,941 tons, carried 1,870 men, and mounted two hundred and twenty-eight guns that fired 3,352 pounds of metal at a broadside. Sir James Yeo had as many ships as Chauncey, but the best of the British squadron carried thirty-two long twenty-fours, four short sixty-eights, and twenty short thirty-twos—an inferior armament to that of the Yankee *Superior;* and the whole Yankee force is fairly said to be as six to five in comparison with the British. Sir James conceded this superiority of force, "which would certainly preclude Yeo from advancing any claims to superiority in skill or courage." So there was no fight. Perhaps it should be added that Chaun-

cey was dangerously sick during July and had to be carried on board ship when he sailed, on July 31st.

When Chauncey got away from port he sailed up to the head of the lake. The British brig *Magnet* was found in the Niagara River, and her crew burned her and fled ashore when the Yankee *Sylph*, a brig of slightly superior force, was sent in to attack her. Leaving three brigs to blockade the Niagara, Chauncey sent the brig *Jones* cruising alongshore between Sackett's Harbor and Oswego, and with his four ships went to Kingston and blockaded Sir James Yeo's four ships that were in the port. The American force was "superior by about fifteen per cent., and Sir James Yeo very properly declined to fight with the odds against him — although it was a nicer calculation than British commanders had been accustomed to enter into."

But in blockading Kingston Chauncey refused to co-operate with the American army in a well-considered plan for invading Canada, and this refusal was all, as it now appears, that stood in the way of capturing Kingston and the British fleet. He wrote, when asked to co-operate in the invasion of Canada, that he thought the request was a "sinister attempt to render us subordinate to, or an appendage of, the army." Then, in an attempt to pose as a gallant knight,

he writes that, "to deprive the enemy of an apology for not meeting me, I have sent ashore four guns from the *Superior*, to reduce her armor in number to an equality with the *Prince Regent's*, yielding the advantage of their sixty-eight pounders. He "yielded the advantage" of the sixty-eights but retained the advantage of long thirty-twos over long twenty-fours, something he was dishonest enough to omit mentioning."

Save for the transportation of 3,000 soldiers from Sackett's Harbor to the mouth of the Genesee River Chauncey did nothing but blockade Kingston until the liner of one hundred guns (called the *St. Lawrence*) was completed there. Then he retired to Sackett's Harbor.

The young officers under him were apparently worthy of an efficient commander—of one who, like Perry, would say, "To windward or leeward they shall fight to-day;" for when Lieutenant Gregory, with Midshipman Hart and six men, while scouting in Kingston Harbor, fell in with two barges and thirty men, the thirty men conquered only after they had killed Hart and wounded the lieutenant and four of his six men. And then, just before the close of navigation Midshipman McGowan headed an expedition into Kingston to blow up the new British liner with a torpedo. This expedition fell in with two of the enemy's guard-

boats, and captured both of them. It is not unlikely that they would have succeeded in destroying the liner but for the fact that she was not in the harbor.

Sir James Yeo got out of Kingston with his new liner and the rest of his squadron on October 15th and assisted the British army on the Niagara frontier, until November 21st, when the ice ended navigation.

One of the Unlaunched Lake Vessels.

From a photograph.

The Americans in the January following began the building of two line-of-battle ships to regain the control of Lake Ontario which Sir James Yeo had gained with his liner *St. Lawrence*. One keel was stretched at Sackett's Harbor—a keel that was 183 feet 7½ inches long. She was to be 214 feet long over all, 56 feet wide and 47 feet deep, with a draught of

27 feet. She was pierced for one hundred and twenty guns, "eighteens and forty-fours." The work was pushed with extraordinary rapidity, but before she was finished news of the peace came, so a house was built over her and thereafter she stood on the keel-blocks as a spectacle for tourists for about eighty years, when her rotten condition made it necessary to burn her. She was called the *New Orleans*. The other, called the *Chippewa*, was laid down farther up the bay, but very little work was done there.

On the whole, the British ships controlled Lake Ontario during four months in 1814, while the Americans held it two and a half. On the other hand, the British loss in men was about three hundred to the American loss of eighty. And the British lost a fourteen-gun brig, a ten-gun schooner (burned when ready for launching), three gun-boats, three cutters, and a gig. The Americans lost the schooner *Growler*, loaded with seven guns; a transport barge loaded with two guns and a hawser, a gig, and the four cannon destroyed at the Oswego fight. The story of the war on Lake Ontario in 1814 is not of the stirring kind, but the Americans certainly had the best of it.

CHAPTER VI

TO DEFEND THE NORTHERN GATEWAY

CHARACTER OF THE RED-COATED INVADERS—"SHAMED THE MOST FEROCIOUS BARBARIANS OF ANTIQUITY"—WORK OF THE YOUTHFUL YANKEE LIEUTENANT MACDONOUGH TO STAY THE TIDE ON LAKE CHAMPLAIN — SHIP-BUILDING AT OTTER CREEK — A BRITISH ATTEMPT AGAINST THE NEW VESSELS REPULSED—THE BRITISH SHIP-BUILDERS AT ISLE-AUX-NOIX—A COMPARISON OF FORCES BEFORE THE BATTLE — MACDONOUGH'S FORESIGHT IN CHOOSING THE BATTLE-GROUND—MACDONOUGH AS A SEAMAN.

We return once more to the Adirondacks—to Lake Champlain—to the Northern Gateway of the Nation as it was found in the war of 1812. Let the reader travel the whole nation over—travel from Eastport to San Diego and from Whatcom to Key West, he cannot find a region that stirs the blood of the patriot more than does the Adirondacks. Three times since the Americans first fought for liberty came the hosts of the enemy with the north wind into the narrow gulch where lies Lake Champlain—they came in whelming drifts to the Split Rock, to Saratoga, and to Plattsburg. And then, like the snow on the sunny southern slopes in May, they melted away. Remarkable—even astound-

ing, as it seems to the tourist of these days—was the ending of two of these invasions. For though Champlain is but a narrow water, and in those days the region round about was in great part an unexplored wilderness, both invasions ended in naval battles between squadrons, and in the later one there was a ship that rated

Near Skenesborough on Lake Champlain.

From an old engraving in the collection of Mr. W. C. Crane.

with the *Constellation* and the *Macedonian*—a frigate fit to sail on any sea.

How the British under Carleton saw "the face of the enemy" near the Split Rock, and Carleton abandoned forever his hope of glory, has already been told, and it now remains to recall to the memory of the reader how Macdonough met the British forces behind Cumberland Head and, in spite of their superior force, destroyed their power.

Of great moment and far-reaching were the campaigns planned by the British against the young American republic in the summer of 1814. Napoleon had fallen. On March 31st the Duke of Wellington had marched into Paris, and on May 11th Napoleon abdicated the throne of France and was sent away to the island of Elba in the Mediterranean. The hosts of veterans that had accomplished the defeat of the French emperor could then be carried across the Western Ocean to fight the Yankees.

What the character of the veterans who were thus sent to the United States was, has been accurately and in detail told both by the Duke of Wellington himself and by Napier.

Says the Duke, who commanded but failed to restrain them, regarding their deeds in a friendly country :

"It is impossible to describe to you the irregularities and outrages committed by the troops. . . . There is not an outrage of any description that has not been committed on a people who have uniformly received them as friends."

And Napier describes as follows the sacking of Badajos by these veterans :

"All the dreadful passions of human nature were displayed. Shameless rapacity, brutal intemperance, savage lust, cruelty and mur-

der, shrieks and piteous lamentations, groans, shouts, imprecations, the hissing of fires bursting from the houses, the crashing of doors and windows, and reports of muskets used in violence resounded for two days and nights in the streets of Badajos."

These veterans, who "shamed the most ferocious barbarians of antiquity," (Napier), were sent across the Atlantic to subjugate a people fighting for freedom from equally brutal press gangs. Some of them were sent to the South that they might take New Orleans and so add the whole watershed of the Mississippi to the British domains, and the number sent on that invasion seemed overwhelming. Washington had been taken meantime, and the public buildings, including the national library, burned. The region of the Chesapeake was overrun. The whole Atlantic coast was blockaded by the tremendous fleets that the British were able to send at the end of the European war. And then came other hosts of "Wellington's Invincibles" to the Sorel River, bound, through the northern gateway, to the headwaters of the Hudson, that they might cut off New England from the middle and southern States.

As the reader will remember, the Americans had two small sloops (one-masted vessels) on Lake Champlain during 1813—the *Growler* and

the *Eagle*, each mounting eleven guns. These were sent by Lieutenant Thomas Macdonough in chase of three British gun-boats, and so eager were the Yankee crews that the sloops followed the British into the outlet of the lake and so far toward the St. Lawrence as to arrive in sight of Isle-aux-Noix, where the British had a fort and where three more British gun-boats were lying. It was now the turn of the British to force the fighting, and they gathered in great numbers on both shores of the river, while the gun-boats, that had, as usual, a long gun each, turned and opened fire at long range. The indiscreet zeal of Lieutenant Sydney Smith, who commanded the American sloops, was fatal, for both were captured.

To repair the loss thus sustained Macdonough seized a merchant sloop called the *Rising Sun* (built at Essex, in 1810, for E. A. Boynton), and converted her into a war-vessel by mounting seven long nine-pounders on her deck. She was renamed the *Preble*. But he was unable to secure a sufficient sea-power to prevent an invasion by a British force that reached the Saranac River a little later, though he undoubtedly hastened the retiring of that force and prevented any further invasions during 1813.

Then as fall came on he repaired to the village of Vergennes, on the Otter Creek (seven miles up from the lake) in Vermont. Ver-

gennes had a brisk community in those days. There were an iron foundry and a rolling-mill and a wire factory there, besides saw-mills and a lot of other industries, the whole dependent on the water-power found in the falls of the creek. Macdonough found there just the workmen needed, and to insure the control of this gateway to the American Union during the next season, he laid, early in the spring, the keel of a full-rigged ship—a corvette—to which he gave the significant name of *Saratoga*. The forests furnished timber in abundance, the rolling-mills made the bar iron for fastenings, and the foundry turned out no less than one hundred and seventy-seven tons of shot for the great guns.

Then a vessel that had been built as a merchant steamer was taken for the use of the Government, and because her machinery got out of order at every trip it was removed and she was rigged as a schooner under the name of *Ticonderoga*.

With the melting of the ice, came the news that the British intended to come to the Otter and destroy the new ships. A fort that mounted seven twelve-pounders on naval carriages had been erected to command the mouth of Otter Creek, and Macdonough sent a party of seamen to reinforce the militia that manned this battery. It was on May 14, 1814, that the British appeared. There were eight gun-boats, each

with a long gun (presumably eighteen and twenty-four pounders) and a bomb-sloop with a big mortar on her deck. The battery on shore opened fire as soon as the enemy came within range, and the enemy replied for an hour, when they gave it up and retired.

A few days later Macdonough brought his new ship, the *Saratoga*, the rebuilt steamer *Ticonderoga*, and the sloop *Preble* out of the creek, and with his gun-boats added was, for the time, master of the lake.

Meantime, however, the British Government had determined, as said, on an invasion like that of the defeated Burgoyne, in the Revolutionary war—an invasion that should cut the nation in two on the line of the Hudson. To accomplish this it was necessary to gain complete control of Lake Champlain. The country had been so far improved that an army could find a roadway along the lake and away to the south, where Burgoyne had been obliged to hew his way through a wilderness; but the control of the lake was, nevertheless, essential. To hold the control they supposed they had when they captured the sloops *Growler* and *Eagle*, they had built the brig *Linnet*, a vessel of the exact size of the American schooner *Ticonderoga*. But when they found that Macdonough had brought out a corvette (she measured about seven hundred and thirty-four tons) they laid

down the keel of a frigate, the exact size of which is nowhere given, but it rated, later, in our navy with the frigates of 1,400 tons. The lowest estimate of her size places it at 1,200 tons. She was built at Isle-aux-Noix in the Sorel—the outlet of Lake Champlain—and was launched on August 25, 1814.

Hearing of the work upon her, Macdonough returned to Vergennes, on the Otter Creek, and once more made the air resound with the slash and rasp and click of broadaxe, saw, and maul. The keel of a brig was laid on July 29th, and on August 16th she slid into the water —she had been built in nineteen days! And yet she was about as large as the *Lawrence* and the *Niagara*, with which Perry won the victory of Lake Erie—she measured well up toward five hundred tons. She was called the *Surprise*, at first, but the name was changed to *Eagle* later on.

The fleet which Macdonough now commanded was as follows: the *Saratoga*, manned by a crew of two hundred and forty and carrying eight long twenty-fours, six short forty-twos, and twelve short thirty-twos; the brig *Eagle*, Captain Robert Henly, manned by a crew of one hundred and fifty, and carrying eight long eighteens and twelve short thirty-twos; the schooner *Ticonderoga*, Lieutenant Stephen Cassin, manned by a crew of one hundred and

T. Macdonough

Thomas Macdonough.

From an engraving by Forrest of the portrait by Jarvis.

twelve, and carrying four long eighteens, eight long twelves, and five short thirty-twos; the sloop *Preble*, with a crew of thirty and an arma-

ment of seven long nines. In addition to these he had the gun-boats *Borer*, *Centipede*, *Nettle*, *Allen*, *Viper*, and *Burrows*, mounting each a long twenty-four and a short eighteen, with the *Wilmer*, *Ludlow*, *Aylwin*, and *Ballard*, each carrying a long twelve. The larger gun-boats had in all two hundred and forty-six men and the smaller one hundred and four. On the whole, the squadron carried crews that aggregated eight hundred and eighty-two men, and eighty-six guns that threw at a broadside 1,194 pounds of shot, of which four hundred and eighty pounds were from long guns and seven hundred and fourteen from short.

Because so small a weight of shot was thrown from long guns, and because the American force has been so grossly misrepresented by the British historians, it is proper here to remind the reader of the very great superiority of long over short guns. The fact that short guns (carronades) went out of use long ago is sufficient proof of this, but it is just as well to keep in mind that the short thirty-twos such as were used in the battle of Lake Champlain, could bear a charge of but two and a half pounds of powder, at most, while a long twenty-four, the shot of which was four-tenths of an inch less in diameter, used a charge of not less than five pounds, and it could stand a pound and even two pounds more. By the tables of ranges

given by Sir Howard Douglas in his famous work on gunnery, Macdonough's short thirty-twos could carry but two hundred yards with an elevation of one-half of a degree (at point-blank the range was less than one hundred yards) while the long twenty-fours of the British fleet, at an elevation of one-half of a degree, carried five hundred yards. This is the range at which the ball would strike smooth water when fired from a point five feet four inches above the water. It would bound along much farther, of course, but the figures are worth quoting, to show approximately the difference in penetrating power of the long gun and the short gun.

To meet the American squadron came the British with a frigate, a large brig, two sloops, and thirteen gun-boats. The frigate *Confiance* was manned by a crew of not less than three hundred and twenty-five men, and she was armed with thirty-one long twenty-fours (one on a pivot forward) and in addition carried six short guns that were probably forty-twos, but may have been thirty-twos. She could fire sixteen long twenty-fours in a broadside—her long-gun broadside was but ninety-six pounds short of the long-gun broadside of the whole American fleet. This weight was exactly made up by the British brig *Linnet*, that was armed with sixteen long twelves — fired ninety-six

pounds in a broadside. At the range of this battle these two vessels alone should have been equal to the entire American squadron, for not only was their long gun metal equal to the Americans, but they had the very great advantage of concentrating in these two ships the weight of long metal that was scattered over fourteen vessels on the American side. The advantage of concentration of power into few ships is so well understood in these days of huge battleships that nothing more need be said on that subject.

In addition to these powerfully armed vessels they had the two vessels captured from the Americans the year before, which had been rebuilt and now measured one hundred and twelve and one hundred and ten tons, respectively, and were armed, the *Chubb* with one long six-pounder and ten short eighteens, the *Finch* with four long sixes and seven short eighteens. And then there were the gun-boats. The *Sir James Yeo*, the *Sir George Prevost*, and the *Sir Sidney Beckwith* carried a long twenty-four and a short thirty-two each. The *Broke* carried a long eighteen and a short thirty-two. The *Murray* carried a long eighteen and a short eighteen. The *Wellington*, the *Tecumseh*, and another whose name is not recorded carried a long eighteen each, while the *Drummond*, the *Simcoe*, and three others whose

names were omitted in Macdonough's report (from which this list of gun-boats is taken) carried short thirty-twos. The British threw at least six hundred and sixty pounds of metal from long guns where the Americans could throw but four hundred and eighty. The American short guns threw seven hundred and fourteen pounds of metal to five hundred and sixty-four at least from the British.

When we come to a consideration of the crews it is worth noting first of all that the Americans were commanded by Lieutenant Thomas Macdonough, a man of twenty-eight years, who was called commodore by courtesy because he commanded a squadron. The British were under Captain George Downie, a man of mature years and wide experience. The whole number of men on each fleet cannot now be ascertained beyond dispute, but the Americans had, as already said, eight hundred and eighty-two, as near as can be determined. The British historians place their force at a smaller figure, and denounce as cowards the Canadians who manned the British gun-boats. The highest number of men they allow to their flagship is three hundred, although there were more than this number of dead and prisoners taken out of her after the battle, and not a few of the dead were thrown overboard from her during the battle to get

them out of the way. Moreover, there was no reason why any vessel of their squadron should be undermanned, for they had a great army on which to draw for men who could handle cannon and muskets. The lowest American estimate in any printed table of the forces is given by Roosevelt, who says they had nine hundred and thirty-seven men, and then adds, in a footnote, "About; there were probably more rather than less," nevertheless the reader must keep in mind that this battle was fought and won at long range, save for a small part at the tail of the line, and neither the actual nor the relative number of men engaged is of any material consequence. Each side had enough men to handle the guns and the ships when the fight began, and that was all either side could wish for. It was a battle of practical seamanship and accuracy in aiming long-range guns. The men that could show the better seamanship and the greater accuracy were to win, in spite of odds; and this is the way they did it:

To begin at the beginning of the preparations, Macdonough chose the best place on the lake for receiving the enemy that was to come against him. With the chart of the lake in mind—possibly with the story of Arnold's battle behind Valcour Island also in mind—Macdonough carried his squadron to Plattsburg Bay. For Sir George Prevost, Governor-Gen-

Major-General Alexander Macomb.

From an engraving by Longacre of the portrait by Sully.

eral of Canada, with an army that, at the lowest estimate, contained 11,000 men, chiefly "Wellington's Invincibles," was coming to Plattsburg, where General Alexander Macomb could muster at first only 1,500 effective men to meet him, although some thousands of militia, including 2,500 hardy Green Mountain Boys, came to help before the battle occurred. But the supporting of Macomb was only one of the lesser reasons that led the able Yankee lieutenant to anchor his squadron in Plattsburg Bay. As was said in describing Arnold's battle, the wind comes either from the north or the south when it blows in the gorge of Lake Champlain. The British were coming from the north. Their ships were of shoal draught. The water was very narrow. The current runs toward the north. They could come only when the wind was from the north. Now Plattsburg Bay opens toward the south. It is enclosed on the east by a point of land that, at places, is two hundred feet high, called Cumberland Head. The British squadron in coming from the north with a fair wind would have to round Cumberland Head and then go up into this bay against the wind that had brought them before they could reach the Yankee ships. And reach the Yankee ships they must—they could not go on to the south leaving a Yankee squadron behind them any more

than Carleton could go on leaving Arnold behind him.

So the position in Plattsburg Bay gave Macdonough the weather gage of the enemy beyond peradventure. But that was not all of the advantage. Macdonough anchored his vessels in a line, nearly north and south, at a distance of about one hundred yards from each other, placing the brig *Eagle*, that was at the north end of the line, so near to Cumberland Head that the enemy could not easily pass around that end of the line and double up on it. Indeed, since the enemy was sure to have a head wind in the bay, it was practically impossible to double around the north end of the line. Next to the *Eagle* lay the corvette *Saratoga;* astern of her was the *Ticonderoga*, and, last of all, was the little sloop *Preble.* Observe that the head of the line was the *Eagle*, the second best Yankee ship, and next to her lay the best of the Yankee squadron. The head of the line concentrated the strength of the squadron and the tail held the weakest ship. The tail was therefore strengthened by the gunboats; but more than that was provided for, because in case the weak *Preble* were attacked by the British flag-ship the big *Saratoga* or the *Eagle* could go down-wind to help her.

Still another advantage is found in this position chosen by Macdonough. The British

were obliged to come in between his line and Cumberland Head, and so could not take a position wholly beyond the range of the Yankee short guns. As a matter of fact, the British commander anchored as far away as he could, but he was obliged by the conformation of the land to come in and take his chances with the carronades.

Having placed his ships in the best possible position for receiving the enemy, Macdonough made one other provision for the battle, and it was one that really saved the day. He hung anchors from the sterns as well as from the bows of his ships. Just how he arranged the stern anchors is not made clear to a landsman in Macdonough's report or in any documents relating to the fight. If the reader will keep in mind the fact that a ship when at anchor always swings with her bow toward the wind, the matter will appear clearer. As the Yankee ships swung thus a hawser was carried from the stern of each ship either to the anchor or to some point on its cable, and made fast. These were the springs. So, then, the ship was held at each end to the anchor and could be made to swing broadside to the wind. And that means that while the wind was blowing out of the bay and the British ships had to come into the bay against it, the Yankee ships lay with their broadsides toward the enemy.

But that was not all. Both cable and spring might be shot away, although both were on the side of the ship away from the enemy. So an extra anchor was planted broad off on each bow. By hauling on hawsers leading to the various anchors the ship could be turned one way or another. Further than that, an anchor was provided at the stern. If this was dropped and the bow cable cut, the wind would swing the ship around so that she would lie stern to it instead of bow to it. And this is called "winding" a ship. In short, Macdonough, though but twenty-eight years old, was a thorough seaman. He prepared and could handle every device for working his ships in the battle that was to come. He could, in perfect confidence, await the onslaught of the enemy.

CHAPTER VII

MACDONOUGH'S VICTORY ON LAKE CHAMPLAIN

THOUSANDS GATHERED ON THE HILL-TOPS OVERLOOKING THE SCENE —THE BRITISH CHOSE TO MAKE A LONG-RANGE FIGHT—INFLUENCE OF THE FIRST BRITISH BROADSIDE ON A SPORTING ROOSTER —MACDONOUGH'S FIRST SHOT — A REELING BLOW FROM THE ENEMY'S FLAGSHIP—FIGHTING AGAINST TREMENDOUS ODDS—TOO HOT FOR ONE YANKEE SHIP—THE *SARATOGA'S* GUNS DISMOUNTED — THE SWARMING BRITISH GUNBOATS — "WINDING SHIP" WHEN DEFEAT IMPENDED—THE BRITISH FAILURE WHEN IMITATING THE MOVEMENT — THE STUBBORN BRAVERY OF A BRITISH CAPTAIN—WHEN THE FIRING CEASED AND THE SMOKE DRIFTED DOWN THE GALE—A MEASURE OF THE RELATIVE EFFICIENCY OF THE TWO FORCES—TWO YANKEE SQUADRON VICTORIES COMPARED—A STIRRING TALE OF MACDONOUGH'S YOUTH —REWARD FOR THE VICTORS—RESULTS OF THE VICTORY.

SUNDAY morning, September 11, 1814, was a most beautiful day in the most delightful season of the year in the Adirondack region. The warmth of the sun was tempered by a northerly breeze that lifted and swayed the forest foliage which was just beginning to show the gorgeous hues of autumn. The water of the lake rippled and danced and sparkled. It was a day when the people of the countryside would naturally leave their houses, to wander over the hills,

and without exception, save the sick and their nurses, every non-combatant in all the region overlooking Plattsburg Bay, did go out to the hill-tops on that day. But it was not through the love of nature that they gathered this time on the heights. For Sir George Prevost, with his veterans from Badajos had already camped in Plattsburg village on the north shore of the Saranac River, and the northerly breeze was sure to bring the British squadron to Plattsburg Bay. Never in the history of the Adirondacks—not even in the days of Algonquin and Iroquois and Tory raids—was there a day of more intense anxiety than this beautiful Sunday morning. For while the seamen on the ships thought most of the honor of the gridiron flag and the glory of hauling down the red cross of St. George, the militia, crouching behind the forts and within the walls of the old stone mill on the bank of Saranac River, were to fight for home and their wives and daughters. "They well knew that the men they were to face were very brave in battle, and very cruel in victory. They feared not for themselves; but in the hearts of the bravest and most careless there lurked a dull terror of what that day might bring upon those they loved."

Out on the lake, off the point of Cumberland Head, lay a ship's cutter, well manned and in charge of a Yankee midshipman. As it lay with

its bow pointing into the bay and its crew resting on their oars, the eyes of the thousands on the hill-tops turned from it to the British troops camped on the north side of the Saranac and then back again, for the boat was a lookout, watching for the British squadron, and it was plain that the British troops would not move till their squadron came.

As the early morning passed and 8 o'clock drew nigh, the idle seamen in the lookout boat suddenly bent to their oars and drove the swift cutter, with signals fluttering in the air, into the bay. The long roll of the drums beating to quarters on the Yankee ships followed. The white new royals of the British frigate, with fluttering flags and pennants above them, appeared over the lower stretches of Cumberland Head, and then, led by the little sloop *Chubb*, followed by the brig *Linnet*, with the huge frigate *Confiance* third and the little sloop *Finch* and the flock of gun-boats last of all, the whole squadron of the enemy rounded the point. With "rattle of block and sheet," the squadron came up into the wind and with flapping canvas drifted, while Captain Downie looked the American squadron over. And then in the order already named they filled away, with the wind coming into their sails over the starboard (right hand) bows, and headed up toward the north end of the American line. The wind and the space fa-

vored the British this far, that they could choose whether they would fight at long range or run in, yard-arm to yard-arm, where valor and muscle would determine, and Downie, knowing the superiority of his long guns, wisely chose to fight at long range.

As the British sails fell asleep under the influence of the breeze, and their bows came ploughing up the bay, "Macdonough, who feared his foes not at all, and his God a great deal, knelt for a moment, with his officers, on the quarter-deck." And thereafter, in perfect silence the men of the whole American squadron stood at their posts and waited for the coming enemy—stood in silence while the British sailors cheered again and again in anticipation of victory.

Finally, however, when the British brig *Linnet*, that, next to the British sloop *Chubb*, was in advance, had arrived within a mile of the Yankee brig *Eagle* at the north end of the Yankee line, the hot blood of her commander could stand inaction no longer and his long eighteen began to bark. It was a waste of effort, for his shot fell short and the firing ceased.

A little later the British brig *Linnet*, on arriving abreast of the Yankee *Saratoga*, opened fire with her long twelves, but all these shots too, fell short, save one, and that one was, in a way, the most notable shot of the whole battle, for it knocked to pieces a chicken-coop belong-

ing to a sailor who, being a man of sporting blood, "had obtained, by hook or by crook," a fighting cock of great repute in Plattsburg. Instead of showing fear at the destruction of its coop, this cock flew to a commanding place above the rail, and there, after flapping its wings vigorously, it crowed loud and long in the manner of its race; whereat the Yankee

The Battle of Lake Champlain.

From an old wood-cut.

sailors all laughed and whooped and cheered vociferously.

A moment later, and while yet the men were grinning at their bird, Macdonough stooped over a long twenty-four on the quarterdeck of the *Saratoga* until he could see the bow of the coming *Confiance* through the sights, when he stepped back and fired the gun. And then his

men cheered again for the shot struck the *Confiance* near the port hawse-pipe and raked her the full length of her gun-deck, killing and wounding several men and smashing her steering-wheel at the last.

At that the long guns of the whole American squadron began to talk. The British sloop *Chubb* and the British brig *Linnet* had now arrived near the Yankee brig *Eagle*, and the British frigate *Confiance* was soon abreast of the American *Saratoga*. The *Chubb* strove to take a position for raking the Yankee *Eagle*, but the *Eagle* was swung to give her one broadside and that was enough. Wholly disabled, she drifted down wind along the American line. More than half of her crew were killed and wounded, and one shot more having been fired into her as she approached the *Saratoga*, she hauled down her flag, when midshipman Charles F. Pratt boarded her and took her over toward Plattsburg, clear of the line of battle. But five of her crew were able to stand up when she arrived.

But before this was done the British Captain Downie had brought his flagship to anchor abreast of the Yankee flagship *Saratoga* at a distance of three hundred or four hundred yards. Not a shot had been fired so far from this ship, but when she had been moored with a spring to her cable, and her guns had been carefully aimed the sixteen long twenty-fours,

double shotted, were discharged as one. Every shot struck the Yankee flagship, and that was the most frightful blast received by any Yankee ship in all this war. The *Saratoga* reeled and shivered as the iron ploughed through her planks and timbers. More than one hundred men were thrown to the deck by the shock, and forty of them failed to get up, for

The Battle of Plattsburg.
From an old wood-cut.

they were killed or wounded, First Lieutenant Peter Gamble being among the slain.

This was done not far from 9 o'clock, and from that time on the Yankee *Saratoga* and the *Eagle* were the targets for the British *Confiance* and *Linnet* that together carried a weight of long gun metal exactly equal to that of the

whole American squadron. It was a terribly unequal fight. There were eight long twelves and sixteen long twenty-fours driving their solid shot into the two Yankees that could reply with only four long twenty-fours and four long eighteens. And the British flagship threw some red-hot shot.

Because some of the long twenty-fours on the British *Confiance* were after the first broadside turned toward the Yankee *Eagle*, which already was in a fierce fight with the British *Linnet*, the *Eagle* was obliged to cut her cable and run. Passing down wind behind the *Saratoga*, she took a new position where her long eighteens would bear on the British flagship, and there she opened an effective fire once more.

But this move had left the British *Linnet* free to devote her whole broadside to raking the Yankee flagship, and although the *Eagle* was of some help the chances of victory seemed at this time very much in favor of the British.

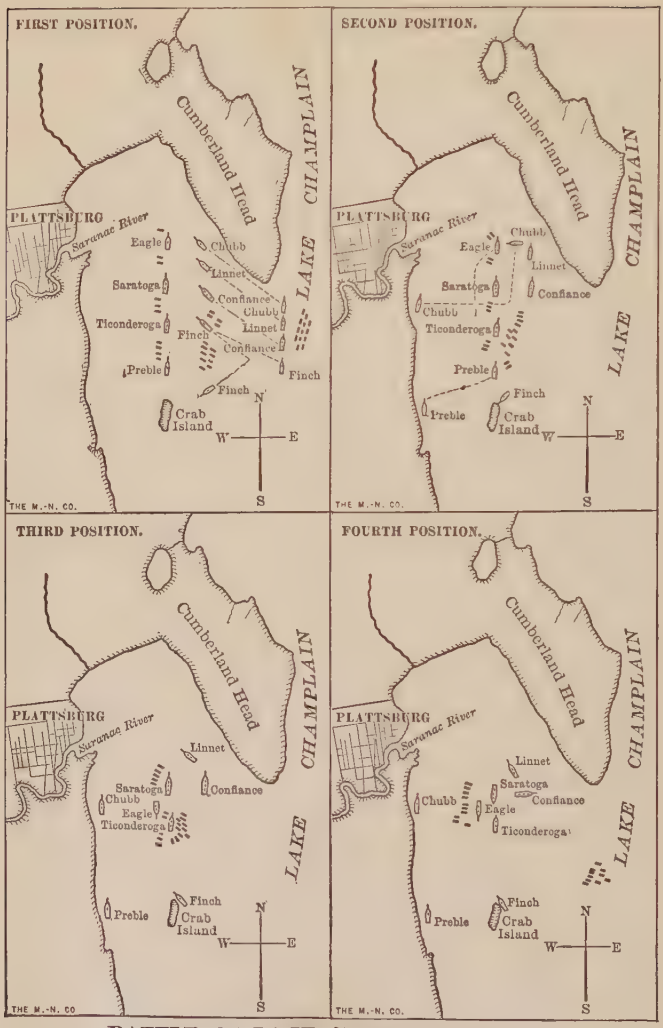
But in spite of odds, Macdonough, was fighting his ship desperately and yet with a perfect mental grasp of the whole situation. Like Perry on Lake Erie, he set an example to his men by working a long gun with his own hands, and every shot he fired told with deadly effect. But as he bent over his gun at one moment a British shot cut the spanker-boom of

Macdonough's Victory on Lake Champlain.

From an engraving in the "Naval Monument."

the *Saratoga* in two and one of the pieces fell on him, knocking him senseless, so that the cry "The Commodore is killed" was passed along the deck. This cry was not true, for Macdonough was soon on his feet again, only to be once more knocked senseless and with a ghastly missile. The head of a captain of a gun was shot off and hurled with tremendous force against Macdonough's head. But he soon recovered from this blow also—recovered only to find that, although he had steadily cut down the fire of the British flagship, the battle was persistently going against him.

The raking fire of the British brig *Linnet* was so effective that gun after gun was knocked out of the battle on the *Saratoga*. The British gun-boats had swarmed about the little sloop *Preble* and driven it away entirely. The Yankee schooner *Ticonderoga* had, indeed, at about the middle of the battle disabled the British sloop *Finch*, at the tail of the British line, so that she drifted ashore on Crab Island; but the British gunboats, in spite of the Yankee gunboats, were driving with the aid of oars right under the guns of the *Ticonderoga*, and she was compelled to give her whole attention to them and leave the *Saratoga* to fight it out with the British frigate and the British brig with such aid as the *Eagle* could render. And at the last Macdonough found that he had not



BATTLE OF LAKE CHAMPLAIN, 1814.

American: Eagle, Saratoga, Ticonderoga, Preble.
English: Chubb, Linnet, Confiance, Finch.
Gunboats and Galleys are represented by short black marks,

Notes to the Diagrams.

1. The British fleet arrived off Cumberland Head, and for a moment hung in the wind in line, in the position shown, off the head. They then sailed up abreast the American fleet and opened the battle, but the sloop *Finch* (*d*) was almost instantly driven away by the fire of the American schooner *Ticonderoga* (No. 3) and drifted toward Crab Island.

2. The British sloop *Finch* (*d*) having been wrecked, she grounded on Crab Island. A little later the British sloop *Chubb* (*a*), being disabled by the fire of the Yankee *Eagle* (No. 1), drifted down between the lines, hauled down her flag, and was carried to the beach by an American midshipman. About the same time the British gun-boats drove the Yankee sloop *Preble* away, and she sought safety at the beach.

3. This is about the position of the squadrons when the battle was going hard against the Americans. The *Eagle* (No. 1) had been driven from the head of the line to a place between the *Saratoga* (No. 2) and the *Ticonderoga*. The British brig *Linnet* (*b*) was raking the *Saratoga*, dismounting the *Saratoga's* guns, while the gun-boats swarmed around the *Ticonderoga* (No. 3). It was then that Macdonough winded the ship, brought a fresh battery into play, and won the victory.

4. The British, when trying to wind the *Confiance* (*c*) around, as Macdonough had done with the *Saratoga* (No. 2), got her stern toward the *Saratoga*, and there she hung, exposed to the raking fire of the *Saratoga's* fresh battery, and flesh and blood could not stand that. Meantime, the *Ticonderoga* had driven away the British gun-boats. When the flag of the *Confiance* came down, the *Saratoga* was turned just enough to bring her broadside to bear on the *Linnet* (*b*), and then the battle ended.

one of the guns left on the fighting side of his ship with which to meet the enemy. Worse yet the *Saratoga* had been twice set on fire by the hot shot of the British frigate, and hot shot were still coming.

The supreme moment of the battle had now come. Calling his men from their useless guns, Macdonough ordered them to drop the anchor that had been provided at the stern and then to clap on the spring that led in at the forecastle. In a moment the ship, impelled by the breeze and drawn by the spring hawser, began to swing as if on a pivot. Her stern was soon pointed at the enemy's frigate. A raking shot from the enemy struck the *Saratoga's* bulwarks near Sailing-master Peter Blum as he directed the winding work, and the splinters literally tore all his clothes off of him. But he gathered up enough of the débris to wrap around his loins and so, dressed like a Cannibal islander, he continued his work. The British worked their guns furiously but, because of their fury, ineffectually, and the guns of the fresh Yankee battery were soon to come into play.

At that the British seamen on the *Confiance* were called from their guns and set to work on spring and cable to wind her around and bring a fresh battery to bear also, for while she had suffered less than the *Saratoga* had, the *Confiance* had lost perhaps two-thirds of her battery

by the accurate shooting of Macdonough's long guns.

No sooner did the British try to wind their ship than the superiority of Yankee forethought and seamanship became manifest. For while the Yankee *Saratoga* swung into position with scarce a break or stop, the British *Confiance* got so far around as to point her stern to the Yankees, where not one of her guns could bear, and there she stuck. Wriggle and twist, haul and curse, as they might (and did) the end was at hand, with triumph for the gridiron flag.

With a verve that made the side tackles rattle, the Yankees brought their fresh guns to bear on the unprotected stern of the British frigate, and thereafter their shot ripped up her deck from stern to anchor bits. They filled the air with splinters. They splashed the guns and beams with blood. They drove the men from the guns and left her a wreck.

Their commander, Captain Downie, was long since dead, killed by a gun that was knocked over by a Yankee shot to fall on him. Lieutenant John Robertson, who succeeded, was both brave and capable, but no one could stand up in such a fight, and two hours after firing her first broadside the British frigate struck her flag to the Yankee corvette.

And then the Yankees once more hauled in on their hawser until their guns would bear on

the irritating British brig *Linnet* that had been bravely battering away at them. The *Linnet* was commanded by Captain Pring, of the Royal Navy, and he was spurred on by the fact that he had been beaten at the mouth of Otter Creek and had been reprimanded by Sir George Prevost. The odds were now as much against him as they had previously been against the Yankee *Saratoga*, but he held on bravely, hoping that relief would come from the gun-boats, while he sent a lieutenant in a boat over to the British flagship to learn the real condition of affairs. The lieutenant brought back the news that not only was the British frigate out of it, and her captain dead, but the *Finch* as well as the *Chubb* had surrendered, and the British gunboats had been driven off when they swarmed at the *Ticonderoga*.

And then Captain Pring turned to look at his own vessel only to find that her masts were shot to pieces, her rigging gone, her sides full of shot holes and the water in her hold above the berth deck and rapidly rising. He had fought his ship to the last gasp. He had earned the right to haul down his flag with never a tinge of shame. Two hours and fifteen minutes after the dreadful broadside of the *Confiance*, the last British flag afloat fluttered to the deck, and the firing died out with two wide apart shots at the retreating gun-boats.

The Battle of Plattsburg.

From an engraving of the picture by Chappel.

For a few moments the hill-top spectators gazed in anxious silence while the smoke of battle drifted from around the ships, revealing by degrees the spars that were still standing. And then some patriot, standing with straining eyes on Cumberland Head, saw that it was the gridiron flag only that fluttered in the smoke-laden breeze, and with a voice that swelled on the air, shouted the news of the Yankee triumph. A hundred throats about him took up the cry. It was echoed by a thousand voices from the hills beyond the bay, and then travelled away across the lake to other thousands on the slopes of the Vermont hills. The troops down in the valley of the Saranac—the Yankee regulars under Macomb, the New York militia under Mooers and Wright and the Green Mountain boys under Strong, took up the shout with such savage cries as were not to be misunderstood by the enemy. They had withstood the onslaught there and now victory was also assured them. Sir George Prevost—the weak and worthless titled commander of the British forces ashore—heard with "extreme mortification" the "shout of victory from the American works." To his mind the "farther prosecution of the service was become impracticable;" worse yet, though his veteran troops outnumbered the Americans, regulars and militia, by two to one, he grew

fearful of his personal safety, and when night came down, dark and thick with an Adirondack storm, he sneaked away, glad to escape.

The pillows of the men from Badajos were wet that night with the rainfall of a northeast gale, instead of woman's tears.

As the last flag came down on the British fleet, Macdonough ordered his gun-boats to pursue the British boats that, without an ensign flying, were pulling away around Cumberland Head. "Our galleys were about obeying with alacrity when all the vessels were reported to me to be in a sinking state; it then became necessary to annul the signal to the galleys and order their men to the pumps." So a number of British galleys escaped—all in fact, but three that were sunk; but the American crews were engaged in the humane work of keeping the ships afloat to save the wounded on both sides, and it did not matter.

When we came to count the killed and wounded we are unable to learn the whole loss on the British side. James, for instance, assumes that none was hurt in the British gun-boats, because none was mentioned in Captain Pring's report. Pring, being a prisoner, wrote his report on the day after the battle in Plattsburg, and so could have no knowledge of the losses on the gun-boats that escaped, and no complete list of those in the captured ships.

Macdonough's Victory on Lake Champlain.

From an engraving by Tanner of the painting by Reinagle.

He says in his report that no muster of the British crews was taken. However, the Americans "took out one hundred and eighty dead and wounded from the *Confiance*, fifty from the *Linnet*, and forty from the *Chubb* and *Finch*." This aggregates two hundred and seventy, but does not include the dead thrown overboard from the British ships during the action, nor does it include British gun-boat casualties. When it is recalled that the gun-boats that gathered around the Yankee schooner *Ticonderoga* were driven off by firing bags of musket-balls at them —musket-balls that simply dusted the entire decks of every one in reach—and that these decks were unprotected by bulwarks while each carried a crew of not less than twenty-six (one good authority says an average of fifty each)—when all this is considered, it is fair to add one hundred to the two hundred and seventy killed and wounded of which we are certain. The British unquestionably lost a third of their force afloat.

Macdonough's list of killed and wounded probably includes only the wounded sent to the hospital. It is as follows: *Saratoga*, twenty-eight killed and twenty-nine wounded; *Eagle*, thirteen killed and twenty wounded; *Ticonderoga*, six killed and six wounded; *Preble*, two killed; *Boxer* (gun-boat), three killed and one wounded; *Centipede* and *Wilmer*, one wounded

on each. In all fifty-two were killed and fifty-eight wounded. Roosevelt thinks ninety more were slightly wounded, but if we go into the slightly wounded list, we find that almost every man on both the flagships was thumped or scratched in some way.

But we can determine the relative efficiency of the two crews much more readily by an examination of the hulls of the flagships. Keeping in mind that the two leading British ships had as great a weight of metal in long guns as the whole Yankee squadron, gun-boats and all, and that these two British ships were relentlessly firing at the American flagship during almost the entire time of the battle, a counting of the round-shot holes in the two flagships gives a measure of British and American marksmanship, which, though less to the credit of the Americans than in some other battles, is unmistakable. The *Saratoga* was struck by fifty-five round shot; the British *Confiance* by one hundred and five. And yet it was point-blank range, for long guns, over water that lay dead, while the first broadside from the *Confiance* was accurate. When the Yankees came to examine into this matter they learned how they had escaped. Having set their guns at the right range for the first broadside the British did not thereafter trouble themselves to look after the range. They loaded and fired "with

fury"—with a whoop and a huzza! But each discharge pinched the wedge-shaped quoin a trifle from under the breech of their guns—lowered the breech and elevated the muzzle—so that very soon their shots were flying high over the Yankee hull. But the cooler Yankee gunners kept the quoins in place and the range good. Worse yet, on examining the British guns some were found with shot under the powder instead of on top, and some with wads at the bottom of the bore and some crammed to the muzzle—the veritable method of the tenderfoot on a runway, but not at all what is expected of an experienced naval tar. And yet the *Confiance* was manned by picked seamen.

When the fight was over Macdonough wrote the following letter to Secretary of the Navy William Jones:

"The Almighty has been pleased to grant us a signal victory on Lake Champlain, in the capture of one frigate, one brig, and two sloops of war of the enemy."

This letter and his prayer on the quarterdeck have been often used in religious discourses—and very properly so. But for the sake of the honor of the flag, and with no desire whatever to lessen the reader's reverence for sacred matters, one who has lived with sailors in both ends of the ship is impelled to declare that, for the purpose of rousing seamen to do their best

when going into battle, one rooster in the rigging is worth a dozen prayers on the quarter-deck.

Because the Battle of Lake Champlain and that on Lake Erie were the only squadron battles of this war, it is worth while comparing the disposition of the forces made by the two youthful commanders who won.

Both Perry and Macdonough were very young for such responsible posts as they held —Perry was twenty-seven, and Macdonough was twenty-eight. Neither had ever had an independent command in battle before being called on to handle a squadron against an experienced enemy.

On Lake Erie Perry had the moral advantage, such as it was, of making the attack; he had also the physical advantage of a somewhat superior force. But these advantages were more than neutralized by the advantage which the enemy held in being able to concentrate his force to receive the attack and by the very light wind, which was still further deadened by the concussion of great guns after firing began. The lack of wind kept a great part of Perry's fleet so far in the rear that the flagship near the head of the line had to stand the brunt of the battle—the concentrated fire of about all of the enemy's squadron. Perry was also handicapped by the unexplained failure of Elliott to close

in on the enemy. Commander Ward, in his "Naval Tactics," written for the instruction of naval cadets, speaks of Perry's oblique attack as "that which gallantry counselled rather than the more circuitous, perhaps more prudent, course" which would have taken Perry's ship abreast of the British before running within gunshot. But when through gallantry he had lost his ship, practically, "and a less determined officer might have despaired of the day," he "quit his own disabled ship for another" and "with consummate judgment and celerity, reformed the van of his squadron, composed of the heaviest ships . . . and not only retrieved his loss, but in a few minutes secured victory." "This combination was most masterly," says Ward, referring to what may be called Perry's renewed attack. It was his gallantry combined with his splendid judgment and celerity of action that gave Perry enduring fame. The Battle of Lake Erie appealed to the sentiment as well as to the cold judgment of Perry's countrymen, whether afloat or ashore, and now that more than eighty years have passed, his handling of the squadron, taking the battle as a whole, meets as hearty approval from naval officers as it did in the fall of 1813.

Quite different were the conditions under which Macdonough had to fight. The force

of the enemy was superior, and he rightly chose to receive rather than make the attack. As Barclay, the British commander on Lake Erie, concentrated his power as much as possible, so did Macdonough when awaiting the enemy. His choice of positions in Plattsburg Bay far outweighed the moral advantage which the British had in making an attack. And the rare judgment which Macdonough showed in preparing for the emergencies of battle far outweighed in the end the superior force—the very greatly superior force which the British possessed in the concentration of their long guns on a frigate and a brig.

Like Perry, Macdonough fought his own ship, giving no attention during a long period to the others of his squadron, after the battle began ; with his own hands he worked a gun, and with perfect skill. His ship, like Perry's, received the concentrated fire of the enemy and bore the greatest part of the loss. The winding of his ship at the supreme moment of the battle was a move like, in a way, that of Perry in going to the *Niagara*, and it was a move that, like Perry's, won the day that had theretofore been disastrous to the Yankee fleet.

In short with a tremendous responsibility thrust suddenly upon them, these two young men did so well, each in his own circumstances, that their actions have ever since been held up

for the admiration as well as instruction of the officers that have come after them.

The Battles of Lake Erie and Champlain were fought when the nation's navy was young and ambitious, but let not even the most optimistic patriot abate one jot of his confidence in the men who now stand erect and uncover their heads whenever they see the old flag hoisted to the peak. For in every class that graduates at Annapolis there are Macdonoughs and Perrys and Hulls and Bainbridges and Porters and Nicholas Biddles and John Paul Joneses.

One history of the War of 1812 says that Macdonough hoisted, just as the British squadron appeared, a signal reading, "Impressed seamen call on every man to do his duty." Whether this was done or not, the adventure of Macdonough in protecting an American seaman from impressment at Gibraltar, in 1806, must be told to show still further the character of the man.

Macdonough was first lieutenant (though but twenty years old) of the Yankee brig *Siren.* One day while the *Siren's* captain was on shore, a Yankee merchantman came into the port and anchored near the *Siren.* Scarcely was her anchor down when a boat put off from a British frigate near by, went directly to the Yankee merchantman, and in a few minutes pulled away again, having one more man

in it than when it left the frigate. Macdonough noted this fact, and sent Lieutenant Page to the merchantman to see what had happened. Page returned with the information that the British had impressed one of the crew of the Yankee merchantman.

On hearing that Macdonough instantly ordered the *Siren's* gig away, manned with armed men, and getting into it himself, he pulled after the frigate's boat, overtook it right alongside the frigate, and although the frigate's boat had eight oars to Macdonough's four, he took out of it by force the impressed seaman and carried him to the *Siren.*

A little later the captain of the frigate came on board the *Siren* in a great rage. He had plainly tried to impress the Yankee, not because one man would be of any consequence as an addition to his crew, but to show his contempt for the little Yankee war-ship, and to be baulked so was a terrible affront. He wanted to know how Macdonough "dared to take a man from one of His Majesty's boats." Macdonough, in no way flustrated, invited the captain into the *Siren's* cabin. The captain refused to go and "with abundance of threats" repeated his question. He was determined, he said, that he would haul his frigate alongside the *Siren* and take the man by force. To this Macdonough replied:

"I suppose your ship can sink the *Siren*, but as long as she can swim I shall keep the man."

"You are a very young man and a very indiscreet young man," said the bully. "Suppose I had been in the boat—what would you have done?"

"I would have taken the man or lost my life," replied Macdonough.

"What, sir! Would you attempt to stop me if I were now to try to impress men from that brig?" thundered the captain.

"I would," replied the calm Macdonough, "and to convince yourself that I would, you have only to make the attempt."

At that the British captain got into his boat, rowed away to his frigate and then turned and rowed toward the Yankee merchantman. Macdonough at once called away his boat with an armed crew, and rowed out to protect the brig, whereat the bold Englishman rowed around the merchantman without boarding her, and with his rudder tucked well under his stern, so to speak, put back to his frigate.

The victory on Lake Champlain stirred the American people so that bonfires and illuminations were seen everywhere. An undue share of praise was awarded to the land forces; it was because there was a fight on land at the time of the battle afloat that the people as a whole

failed to sing the praises of Macdonough as loudly as they had sung those of Perry. It is the work of the historian to show that Champlain was entirely a naval victory. But Macdonough did not lack appreciation. The Legislature of New York, understanding very well that it was the wooden wall afloat that prevented the desecration of the homes of northern New York, gave him 2,000 acres of land, while that of Vermont, actuated by the

Medal Awarded to Thomas Macdonough after His Victory on Lake Champlain.

same feelings, bought a farm on Cumberland Head (two hundred acres) overlooking the scene of his victory, and gave it to him. The Congress voted thanks to all the force; gave gold medals to Macdonough, to Robert Henley, commanding the *Eagle*, and to Stephen Cassin, commanding the *Ticonderoga*, with silver medals to all other commissioned officers. The nearest male relatives of Lieutenant Peter Gamble and of Lieutenant John Stans-

bury each received a silver medal. The captured vessels were purchased by the Government for a round sum, which was distributed as prize-money, while the petty officers and seamen got three months' extra pay. Macdonough was promoted to the rank of post-captain.

It is a curious fact that the captured British ships were ballasted with cannon and shot instead of the broken rock commonly used in those days. They were confident of victory,

Stephen Cassin's Medal.

and these supplies were for use in the conquest of northern New York and Vermont. And when Prevost fled he left immense quantities of military stores behind him.

The result of the battle was very mortifying to the enemy, and Sir George Prevost is said to have died of the chagrin. And in the discussions over a proposed treaty of peace, then in progress, the influence of this American victory was most important. The American commis-

sioners had demanded that territorial limits remain as before the war. The British Government was clutching at the northeast corner of Maine when, to quote Schouler, the news of the British disaster at Plattsburg "made it doubtful whether the rule of *uti possidetis* might prove a positive disadvantage to England." And that is to say that in an exchange of conquered territories the Americans might gain more than they would lose. The Duke of Wellington wrote to Lord Castlereagh that "you have gained nothing yet in the American war which gives you the right to demand on principle a territorial concession." So Castlereagh, with evident chagrin, yielded the point to the American commissioners. The victory of Macdonough served materially to bring the war to a close.

The most popular song in the United States during the winter of 1814–15 was the following:

SIEGE OF PLATTSBURG.

Backside of Albany, 'tan Lake Champlain:
One little pond, half full a water—
Plattsburg dare too, close upon de main—
Town small—he grow bigger do, hereafter.
On Lake Champlain,
Unkle Sam set he boat;
And Massa Macdonough he sail 'em—
While Gen'ral M'Comb,
Make Plattsburg he home,
Wid he army, whose courage nebber fail 'em.

Eleventh day of September
In eighteen hundred and fourteen,
Gubbenner Probose, and he British soldier,
Come to Plattsburg, a tea-party courtin'.
An' he boat come too,
Arter Unkle Sam boat—
Massa Donough do, look sharp out he winder,
Den Gin'ral M'Comb,
Ah! he always home!
Catch fire too, jiss like tinder!

Bow! wow! wow! den de cannon 'gin t' roar;
In Plattsburg, an' all 'bout dat quarter—
Gubbenner Probose try he hand 'pun de shore.
While he boat take he luck 'pun de water,
But Massa Macdonough
Kick he boat in de head!
Break he heart, broke he shin, 'tove he calf in—
An' Gin'ral M'Comb,
Start ole Probose home!
Taught me soul den, I must die a laffin.

Probose scart so, he left all behind—
Powder, ball, cannon, tea-pot an' kettle—
Some say, he cotch a cold, perish in he mind,
'Bloig'd eat so much raw and cold vittle.
Unkle Sam berry sorry
To be sure for he pain—
Wish he nuss heself up, well an' hearty—
For Gen'ral M'Comb
An' Massa Donough home
When he notion for a nudder tea-party.

CHAPTER VIII

SAMUEL C. REID OF THE *GENERAL ARMSTRONG*

STORY OF THE DESPERATE DEFENCE OF AMERICA'S MOST FAMOUS PRIVATEER—SHE WAS LYING IN NEUTRAL WATER WHEN FOUR HUNDRED PICKED BRITISH SEAMEN IN BOATS THAT WERE ARMED WITH CANNON CAME TO TAKE HER BY NIGHT—ALTHOUGH SHE HAD BUT NINETY MEN, AND THERE WAS TIME TO FIRE BUT ONE ROUND FROM HER GUNS, THE ATTACK WAS REPELLED WITH FRIGHTFUL SLAUGHTER—SCUTTLED WHEN A BRITISH SHIP CAME TO ATTACK HER—THE CUNNING OMISSIONS AND DELIBERATE MIS STATEMENTS OF THE BRITISH HISTORIANS EXAMINED IN DETAIL —THE HONORABLE CAREER OF CAPTAIN REID IN AFTER LIFE —A PICKED CREW OF BRITISH SEAMEN AFTER THE *NEUFCHÂTEL* —A THREE-TO-ONE FIGHT WHERE THE YANKEES WON—OTHER BRAVE MILITIAMEN OF THE SEA.

In the foremost rank of the most desperate and valorous conflicts recorded in the annals of the sea stands that made by Captain Samuel C. Reid, of the privateer schooner *General Armstrong*, in the harbor of Fayal, in the Azore islands, beginning early in the evening of September 26, 1814, and lasting, with intervals of peace, all night.

The *Armstrong* was a New York privateer. She was owned by Rensclaer Havens, Thomas

Formar, and Thomas Jenkins. In the early part of the war she carried nineteen guns, of which one was a long twelve-pounder and the others long nines. Manned by one hundred and fifty men under Captain Tim Barnard, she took nineteen prizes. Later twelve of the long nines were removed for use in a fort and a forty-two pounder placed amidship for a "long tom."

In this style, under Captain Samuel C. Reid, she sailed from New York Harbor on September 9, 1814. The letter of instruction from her owners to her captain suggested that he cruise near the Madeiras to intercept the Brazil fleet. To this was added a paragraph worth quoting. It said, "Be particular in strictly prohibiting any plunder or depredations."

With a fair wind and the Gulf Stream to help him along, Captain Reid arrived at Fayal Roads on September 26th and anchored there for the purpose of getting water and such fresh provisions as the port afforded.

The American consul, Mr. John B. Dabney, informed him that no British cruisers had been among the Azores for several weeks, but at about dusk that afternoon, while the captain, the consul, and some friends were standing on the deck of the *Armstrong*, the British brig *Carnation* suddenly came into view under the

northeast head of the harbor within range of long guns.

Consul Dabney was quite certain that the British would respect the neutrality of the port, but as soon as a pilot had arrived alongside of the *Carnation* "she hauled close in and let go her anchor within pistol-shot of us." And then as her anchor splashed into the water the big British liner *Plantagenet* and the frigate *Rota* came in sight.

Thereafter for some time there was a rapid exchange of signals between the *Carnation* and the big ship. All of the boats of the *Carnation* were dropped into the water. One boat was sent off from her to the *Plantagenet* and there was, in short, no end of bustle about her decks.

A full moon was shining that night, and in the clear air of the Azores every move of the enemy was distinctly seen from the *Armstrong* and from the shore as well. The significance of the bustle on the *Carnation* was unmistakable, and Captain Reid, after clearing for action, got up his anchor, and with the aid of long oars began to sweep the *Armstrong* away from the enemy and close inshore. There was only a faint air blowing and no sails were set on the *Armstrong*. But as soon as the crew of the *Carnation* saw the Yankee leaving them they cut cable and made sail in pursuit while

four boats were manned with armed men and sent after her.

It was now about eight o'clock. Seeing the boats coming Captain Reid dropped his anchor, got springs on his cable and then triced up a stout rope net all around the vessel above the rail—a net that the boarders could not quickly cut out of the way nor easily climb over. Then Captain Reid hailed them repeatedly but they made no reply, unless, indeed, the quickening of their stroke, which was manifest, was a reply.

That the four boats were making a dash to capture the *Armstrong* was not to be doubted and is not doubted now by any fair mind. In defence of his vessel attacked in a neutral harbor Captain Reid opened fire. The enemy returned the fire instantly and came on at their best stroke, but before they had reached the rail of the schooner they had had enough, and while some of them begged for quarter, they all turned about and rowed back to the *Carnation.*

The loss of the enemy in this preliminary skirmish was never printed, but the *Armstrong* lost one man killed and the First Lieutenant, Frederick A. Worth, wounded.

When the enemy had retired, the *Armstrong* was hauled in until within pistol shot of the Portuguese Castle on shore, and there she was

moored, head and stern to the beach, after which the arms were all prepared for action and the crew, to a man, awaited the next assault with the hearty good-will characteristic of the American seamen when resisting insolent aggression. And meantime the whole population of the port, roused by the fire in the first attack, gathered on every height overlooking the Yankee's berth to watch the issue. The Portuguese Governor was among those who saw it all.

Neither spectator nor sailorman had long to wait for the first manœuvre. By 9 o'clock the *Carnation* was seen drifting in with a large fleet of boats. Pretty soon the boats left the *Carnation* and gathered under shelter of a reef of rocks at long musket range from the *Armstrong*. Here they lay until midnight, when, after being divided into three divisions, of four boats each—the number of boats was easily counted by every spectator of the scene—they headed for the desperate Yankees.

Waiting until within close range Captain Reid opened on them. "The discharge from our long tom rather staggered them," but they instantly recovered and, returning the fire with carronades, boat-howitzers, and muskets, they gave three cheers and bravely dashed in at the schooner. One round was all that Captain Reid could give them from his four cannon,

The *General Armstrong* at Fayal.

for they were at the schooner's low rail before he could reload. There was nothing for it then but to fight, man to man, man-fashion. With their sharpened cutlasses the British seamen strove to cut their way to the schooner's deck, while the marines with muskets and bayonets strove to clear the Yankees away from the schooner's rail. But the Yankees with muskets and pistols for a few rounds and with pikes and cutlasses and axes stood to their post and stabbed and slashed and chopped back. The British came on with fierce cheers and cries; the Yankees with close-shut mouths and bared arms split open the British heads down to the yelling mouths, and cut the throats and broke in the backs of those that twisted and turned to find a way on board. The enemy had come in three divisions; they swarmed at the stern and the waist and the bow. There were more than three hundred of them to the eighty-eight Americans, and for forty minutes the British fought with a vigor born of hatred, contempt, and mortified pride. But they were beating their heads and arms against a granite rock. Not once did an armed enemy stand for three seconds on the *Armstrong's* deck. Because Second Lieutenant Alexander O. Williams was killed on the forecastle, and Third Lieutenant Robert Johnson was shot through the knee and unable to stand erect, the defence

on the forecastle almost failed. But Captain Reid rallied his victorious shipmates from the quarterdeck and charging forward drove the last boat from the schooner's bow.

Two of the enemy's boats "which belonged to the *Rota*" were captured, "literally loaded with their own dead. Seventeen only had escaped from them both"—escaped by swimming ashore. The others, not less than fifty in number, were killed. Several boats were destroyed. "In another boat under our quarter, commanded by one of the lieutenants of the *Plantagenet*, all were killed save four. This I have from the lieutenant himself." So says Captain Reid. The British officers admitted to Consul Dabney "that they have lost in killed, and who have died since the engagement, upward of one hundred and twenty of the flower of their officers and men. The captain of the *Rota* told me he lost seventy men from his ship." So wrote the consul in his official report. Afterward "the British, mortified at this signal and unexpected defeat, endeavored to conceal the extent of their loss."

In order to show American readers in what fashion British historians have handled the stories of the actions in which British seamen were badly defeated by the Yankees, the entire report which Allen wrote of this affair is here given *verbatim*;

"On the 26th of September, a squadron, consisting of the 74-gun ship *Plantagenet*, Captain Robert Lloyd; 38-gun frigate *Rota*, Captain Philip Somerville; and 18-gun brig *Carnation*, Commander George Bentham, cruising off the Western Islands, discovered at anchor in Fayal Roads the American schooner privateer *General Armstrong*, Captain Camplin, of seven guns and ninety men. The neutrality of the port having been violated by the American captain in firing on a boat from the *Plantagenet*, by which two men were killed and two wounded, Captain Lloyd determined to attempt the capture of the privateer by the boats of the squadron. At 8 h. P.M. the *Plantagenet* and *Rota* anchored off Fayal Road, and at 9 h. seven boats from the two ships, containing one hundred and eighty men, under the orders of Lieutenant William Matterface of the *Rota*, departed on this service. At midnight, after a fatiguing pull, the boats arrived within hail, when they received from the schooner, and from a battery erected with some of her guns on a point of land, a heavy fire of cannon and musketry. Two of the boats were sunk, and more than half the men that had been sent away in them killed or wounded. The remainder returned, and about 2 h. A.M. on the 27th reached the *Rota*. The *Rota's* first and third lieutenants (Matterface and Charles R. Nor-

man), one midshipman, and thirty-one seamen and marines were killed ; and her second lieutenant, Richard Rawle, Lieutenant of Marines Thomas Park, —— Bridgeman (acting) purser, two midshipmen, and eighty-one men wounded. Soon after daylight the *Carnation* stood into the roads to attack the privateer ; but the Americans set fire to and destroyed her."

A careful examination of this report will be found most interesting.

First of all let the reader observe that the American consul in his official report says that the captain of the *Rota* admitted a loss of seventy from that one ship. But Allen says that the *Rota's* loss was thirty-four killed and eighty-five wounded—in all one hundred and nineteen.

This is important because it proves that Consul Dabney in his report of the British losses understated at least the loss of the *Rota ;* it proves that he was entirely candid and fair in his report. He truthfully reported what the British officers told him. It is therefore reasonable to suppose that when he says the British officers admitted to him that they had lost one hundred and twenty of their best men, he also tells the truth. It is not unreasonable to suppose further that these British officers understated the facts, as did the captain of the *Rota* when talking to him.

Let us now consider the number of boats attacking the little schooner. Dabney says that twelve large boats "crowded with men" came at the schooner. Observe that this is a statement by a spectator whose candor is proved by the enemy's historian, and then read Allen's report which says that "the *Plantagenet* and *Rota* anchored off Fayal Road, and at 9 h. seven boats from the two ships, containing one hundred and eighty men," were sent. He says "Captain Lloyd determined to attempt the capture of the privateer by the *boats of the squadron*," and then he omits saying whether boats were sent from the *Carnation*, and leaves the reader to infer that none was sent from her. Will a fair-minded student accept Consul Dabney's count of twelve boats or will he do as Allen would have him do—will he believe that after Lloyd determined to attack with "the boats of the squadron" only the seven boats from the two ships and no more were sent? Is this unfairly accusing Allen of lack of candor? If anyone thinks it is unfair, let him note further that Allen gives in detail the losses among the *Rota's* crew and does not say a word—not one word—about losses on the boats from the *Plantagenet*.

There were "seven boats from the two ships." The one was a line-of-battle-ship and the other a frigate. Would not the larger ship send more

boats than the smaller one? But grant that the larger ship sent three and the smaller one four, what was the loss on the *Plantagenet?* Were the *Plantagenet's* men cowards that they did not fight and get hurt? Certainly the loss on the *Plantagenet* was as great in proportion to the number of men engaged as on the *Rota.* Captain Reid of the *Armstrong* says that he learned from a lieutenant belonging to the *Plantagenet*, that all but four men were killed in one of the *Plantagenet's* boats under the *Armstrong's* quarter. Shall we believe this explicit statement or must we infer, because Allen says nothing about any loss on the *Plantagenet*, that there really was no loss there? And in connection with this let the reader note once more that no boat from the *Carnation* is mentioned by Allen and that no loss among her crew is recorded by him.

And then consider once more that one hundred and nineteen were killed and wounded on the *Rota's* boats. How many men were there in each of her boats that she should have lost that number of killed and wounded in four? These boats carried carronades. By referring to the accounts of other battles of the kind (that at Craney's Island, for instance, where James himself admits that there were seven hundred men in fifteen boats, or forty-six to the boat) we learn that an ordinary ship's cutter

would carry at least twenty-five men, and a long-boat or launch anywhere from forty men up to sixty or more. Recalling now that the Americans credit two of the *Rota's* boats with seventeen men escaping ashore by swimming, it is fair to suppose that part of them were unhurt. And if she had four boats to the *Plantagenet's* three, part of each of her other two also escaped. In short, if she lost one hundred and nineteen it is fair to suppose that twenty-one escaped unhurt—it is fair to suppose that she averaged at the very least thirty-five men to the boat. The candid Dabney says the boats were crowded with men. We are at liberty, in view of these facts, to doubt Allen's statement that only one hundred and eighty men were in the seven boats. Because he omits to tell the loss of the *Plantagenet*, and because he deliberately omits to tell how many men the *Carnation* had in the fight as well as how many she lost, we are compelled to believe that Allen deliberately understated the number of men in the boats he admits were sent. In short there is every good reason for supposing that when Consul Dabney wrote that "near four hundred men were in the boats when the attack commenced," he was not only entirely sincere but reasonably accurate. If there were but thirty men to the boat there were three hundred and sixty in the entire

flotilla of twelve, and that is "near four hundred." Let any reader look up the stories of boat actions and then say whether even thirty-five is too large an estimate for the average number of men in a boat's crew.

Allen says that the "neutrality of the port having been violated by the American captain in firing on a boat from the *Plantagenet*," an attack was planned. The consul says Reid fired only when four boats dashed at the Yankee schooner. In view of the omissions in the British account we would be justified in believing the candid consul rather than Allen, but here, fortunately, we have the testimony of the enemy to prove that they were the aggressors, for not only did the British admit to the Portuguese that the British ships had violated the neutrality of Fayal; they made an ample apology and *they paid for damages done.*

To complete the story of the *Armstrong* it must be told that after the British were beaten off the Americans remained on guard. They had lost but two killed and seven wounded, and although a few had fled on shore there were enough left to meet another attack of the kind repelled. At 3 o'clock in the morning of the 27th Captain Reid was called ashore by Consul Dabney, and there he learned that the Portuguese Governor had sent a note to Cap-

tain Lloyd begging that hostilities cease, but Lloyd had replied that he was determined to have the privateer at the risk of knocking down the whole town.

All hope of saving the Yankee schooner was gone, and the wounded were sent ashore with the effects of the entire crew. The British brig came in at daylight and began to fire broadsides. The crew of the Yankee schooner fired back for a time, but eventually scuttled and abandoned her. Seeing that she was abandoned the British came on board hastily and set her on fire. The Yankee crew having escaped on shore, Captain Lloyd addressed an official letter to the Governor stating that in the American crew were two men who had deserted from his squadron in America, and as they were guilty of high treason, he required them to be found and given up. Accordingly the Portuguese soldiers mustered the entire American crew and compelled them to submit to an examination by the British officers. No British deserters were found. It is to the credit of the British historian Allen that he did not mention this act of Lloyd.

It is worth noting here, that Captain Lloyd's squadron were bound to the Mississippi River —they were a part of the force sent on the land-grabbing expedition which the British Government planned and tried to execute while

the negotiations for peace were under consideration at Ghent.

Captain Reid returned home by the way of Savannah. He was everywhere enthusiastically received for his heroic defence of the flag. The State of New York gave him a vote of thanks and a sword. The merchants of New York gave him a set of silver plate.

Samuel Chester Reid was a native of Norwich, Connecticut. He had seen service as a midshipman under Truxton. He was after this fight a sailing-master in the American navy, where his record for honor was as high as that of any man. There was absolutely no reason for doubting his report of his fight; in fact, it was modest and well within the facts as became a sea hero. Besides, it was fully corroborated by Consul Dabney and, as shown here, by the unwilling testimony of the enemy. He was at one time a port warden at New York and afterward Collector of the Port. It was he who originated the present scheme of arranging the stars and the stripes in the American flag, whereby the stripes number thirteen and the stars are of the same number as the States. Resolutions of thanks to him were passed in both houses on April 4, 1818, "for having designed and formed the present flag of the United States." He died in New York City on April 28, 1861, and was buried in Greenwood.

When Lieutenant (afterward the famous Captain) Isaac Hull during the French war cut the schooner *Sandwich* out of Puerta Plata, a neutral port, the American Government returned the vessel with apologies. An American reads this with the greater satisfaction when he recalls the fact that British historians defend their Government for refusing to undo the wrong done to the owners of the *Armstrong*.

Of a character like that of the *Armstrong* was the fight made by the crew of one other New York privateer, the *Prince de Neufchâtel*, Captain J. Ordronaux. It was made on October 11, 1814. A famous privateer was this swift cruiser, and lucky in the extreme. She was credited with bringing in eighteen prizes all told, and in the cruise during which she made the fight, she brought in no less than $300,000 worth of goods, besides a large quantity of coin. Moreover she had been chased by and had escaped from seventeen armed British vessels, when on October 11th, being off Nantucket at the time, the British frigate *Endymion*, of which something will be told further on, came in chase of her. She would have outsailed the *Endymion* had the wind held, but a dead flat calm came on and neither ship could move.

At this the *Endymion* hoisted out five boats, large and small, and manned them with one

hundred and eleven men. This was a most serious menace to the Yankee, for she had sent in so many prizes that only forty of her crew, at most (accounts differ — Coggeshall says thirty-three), including every one, remained. Nevertheless the Yankees triced up their nettings and prepared to fight it out. It was at about 9 o'clock at night that the boats arrived beside the privateer. They had spread out so that one came on each bow, one on each beam, and one astern. But the Yankee crew were ready, and when the British climbed up they were beaten back, and at the end of twenty minutes the British begged for quarter. One of their large boats, with forty-three men in it, had sunk. Another that had contained thirty-six men, surrendered, while the others drifted off with very few, indeed, to man the oars. Of the thirty-six originally in the boat that surrendered, eight had been killed and twenty wounded—twenty-eight out of thirty-six—say three-fourths. It is not unlikely that more than three-fourths of the entire attacking party were killed and wounded. Allen admits that the loss was twenty-eight killed and thirty-seven wounded out of the crews of the boats that returned to the ship. He makes no statement regarding the number lost either by wounds or as prisoners in the launch captured, but admits the capture. The killed and wounded in the

launch should be added to the numbers given by Allen, so that the total British loss was at least thirty-six killed and fifty-seven wounded.

The privateer lost seven killed and fifteen badly and nine slightly wounded—all but nine of those on board were hurt. It was a right desperate fight on both sides. And it shows what a few men can do when they fight with relentless determination. "The privateersmen gained the victory by sheer ability to stand punishment."

Meantime, when the battle began there were almost as many prisoners on board the privateers as there were Americans; when it was over the unhurt Americans had six times their number of the enemy to care for, besides nursing their own wounded. Yet they brought all safely into port.

The *Lottery*, Captain Southcombe, of Baltimore, fought off for an hour nine British barges containing two hundred and forty well-armed men before she was taken, and the loss of the British in killed alone was many more than the whole crew of the Yankee.

And a right brave action was that which Captain Boyle, of the Baltimore clipper *Chasseur*, made with the British war-schooner, *St. Lawrence*. Boyle ran down on the *St. Lawrence* by mistake. He thought her a merchantman. But when alongside he fought it out,

Fight Between the Brig *Chasseur* and the Schooner *St. Lawrence* off Havana, February 26, 1815.
From a lithograph in Coggeshall's "Privateers."

and in just fifteen minutes from the firing of the first gun the enemy's flag came down. This was extraordinary for two reasons. The enemy was a regular man-o'-war, and she was also of superior force. The enemy carried twelve short twelves and one long nine. Boyle at this time had six long twelves and eight short nines, but having no nine-pound shot he used a four-pound and a six-pound shot together. It was a fight yard-arm to yard-arm, so that the enemy's broadside of eighty-one pounds was better than Boyle's of seventy-six, even though Boyle could fire three long twelves. Accounts differ as to the number of men engaged. Boyle had eighty all told. He said he took out of the *St. Lawrence* eighty-nine besides passengers. Since no one but James disputes this there is no reason for doubting Boyle. James understates the number of the British crew because they struck when the privateersmen were boarding. The Yankee lost five killed and eight wounded; the British six killed and seventeen wounded.

The fights herein recorded were the most famous made by the privateers of this war. The sea militia were on these occasions well led, and therefore as brave as regular naval seamen. A careful study of the fights of this kind shows that in the majority of the cases where a privateer was attacked by a British man-o'-war crew the privateer surrendered militia fashion—tamely.

But where the officers were men of sound nerves the fight was as desperate and about as well conducted as any naval fight involving the same forces. The fact that the Yankee privateers in this war took and destroyed or sent in about 1,600 British ships, including a considerable number of small war-ships, while the total number of Yankeee ships taken by the British was only five hundred—this fact is significant. The total number of Yankee privateers was two hundred and fifty. Their record on the whole was so good that the fame of their deeds helped to preserve the peace of their country long after their timbers had rotted away ; and it still helps.

CHAPTER IX

A YANKEE FRIGATE TAKEN BY THE ENEMY

THEY COMPLETELY MOBBED "THE WAGGON" AND SO GOT HER AT LAST—THE FIRST NAVAL CONTEST AFTER THE TREATY OF PEACE WAS SIGNED—THE *PRESIDENT*, WHEN RUNNING THE BLOCKADE AT NEW YORK, GROUNDED ON THE BAR, AND, ALTHOUGH SHE POUNDED OVER, SHE FELL IN WITH THE SQUADRON—A BRITISH FRIGATE THOROUGHLY WHIPPED, BUT TWO MORE OVERTOOK HER—A POINT ON NAVAL ARCHITECTURE—A TREATY THAT HUMILIATES THE PATRIOT.

THE treaty which the British and American commissioners negotiated at Ghent and which they signed on December 24, 1814, is as instructive as it is humiliating to an American patriot. There are eleven articles to this treaty. These provided for a cessation of hostilities; for a boundary line; for public and private property and documents captured, or to be captured before the ratification of the treaty; for the red Indians of the frontier; for the negro slaves and the suppression of the black slave trade on the high seas. It provided for everything needful but one. The American Government had been forced to declare war be-

cause of a popular sentiment generated by the friends of the American seamen who had been forced into slavery by British press-gangs: the American naval seamen had fought as no naval seaman had ever fought before because they were fighting for "sailors' rights"; but when the treaty of peace was written there was not one word in it about those rights—not one. The British ministers stubbornly refused to touch upon or even consider the subject of impressment, and the American commissioners, on the plea that the question was now "purely theoretical,"—that, the war in Europe being over, there would be no longer any occasion for impressment—the American commissioners, be it said, consented to omit the point. The real cause of the war was ignored in the treaty of peace.

It is humiliating to a patriot to recall this fact, but it is equally humiliating to remember that the motto on the big burgee flaunted by Yankee cruisers read "*Free trade* and Sailors' Rights." The rights of property were placed ahead of the rights of man. The sneer of the British historian Napier, when he referred to the Americans as "a people who (notwithstanding the curse of black slavery which clings to them, adding the most horrible ferocity *to the peculiar baseness of their mercantile spirit*, and rendering their republican vanity ridiculous)

do, in their general government, uphold civil institutions that have startled the crazy despotisms of Europe"—this sneer was justified in its day, by the treaty of Ghent, as by the treatment accorded the unfortunate colored race.

Nevertheless, because of the qualities displayed by the American seamen, from the battle between the *Guerrière* and the *Constitution* to Macdonough's victory on Lake Champlain, and in all the naval encounters, except possibly one that followed the signing of the treaty—because of the hearty good will that backed the strong and well-trained arm of the republican sailor, what was denied in the promise of peace was granted when peace came. The British politicians quibbled and the British historians have garbled and sneered, but the full significance of the naval battles of the War of 1812 was and is appreciated by the real rulers of the British nation. And that significance, though it brought a treaty—a written document—that is humiliating, brought a lasting state of peace that was and is a matter of pride to all who honor the flag. It did more. The manifest superiority of the American seamen was so great that, by degrees, the British naval authorities were led to abandon their cruel methods of manning and disciplining their ships and to adopt the American system of good pay and good food and just treatment

instead. Treating men as men has worked as well, these late years, in the British navy, as it has always worked in the American. Moreover a day was to come when the British Government was to say, in a most emphatic Government document, that the American declaration of war in 1812 was entirely justified.

As said, the treaty of peace was signed on December 24, 1814. But it had to be ratified by both Governments, and the news that peace had been declared had to be promulgated throughout the world before hostilities would cease. There were battles not a few thereafter. The Yankee sailor was to be heard from on the sluggish waters of the Mississippi's swamps; under the bleak cliffs of Tristan d' Acunha, on the sunlit seas of India, and elsewhere. He did not always triumph, but his flag did not come down save at the behest of greatly superior numbers; and this chapter shall tell how it came down in the first naval contest after the treaty was signed.

It was on the unlucky *President* when she was commanded by Stephen Decatur. As the reader will recall, Decatur was blockaded with the *United States*, the *Macedonian*, and the *Hornet* at New London by a British squadron, beginning in June, 1813. There the two frigates remained until the end of the war. Late in 1814 Decatur was transferred to the *Presi-*

dent, then in New York harbor. Rodgers had had the ill luck to make four cruises in her without ever having a battle or even taking enough merchantmen to pay the expense of keeping the ship in commission. A very excellent revision of an old proverb says that "all things come to him who 'rustles' while he waits." It is a fact that the active aggressive men of the navy in that war did not have much bad luck.

Decatur, when in command of the *President*, was ordered to take the little sloop-of-war *Hornet*, Captain James Biddle, and the new Yankee corvette *Peacock*, Captain Lewis Warrington, and go on a cruise to the East Indies, as Captain Bainbridge with the *Constitution*, the *Essex*, and the *Hornet* had started to do. Accordingly, having appointed the island of Tristan d'Acunha as a rendezvous, Decatur sailed out of New York harbor with a substantial northerly gale to help him, on the night of January 14, 1815. The gale had prevailed long enough to blow the blockading squadron clear of Sandy Hook, and all went well until the ship was crossing the bar, when, by a mistake of the pilots, she struck the sand. There was enough of a sea rolling to lift and drop the big ship on the bar and for an hour and a half she lay there pounding. By that time the tide had raised her and over she went, though very much "hogged

and twisted." That is she had literally broken her back, and her fair shape was warped into an irregular one.

Because of the wind Decatur was compelled to go to sea. Skirting the Long Island coast for about fifty miles he concluded he must be clear of the British squadron, and so headed away on his course for Tristan d'Acunha. As it happened, Captain John Hayes, commanding the British blockading squadron, had calculated that any ship leaving New York would try to get to sea by hugging the Long Island coast, on the theory that the British would be blown away down the Jersey beach; so he had kept his squadron "bucking the gale" off the Long Island coast, and thus it happened that when Decatur eased his sheets to run away on his course, he ran right into the British squadron.

The British squadron included the razee *Majestic* (a cut-down liner); the frigate *Endymion*, that had been built to meet the big Yankees and was armed as they were, with long twenty-fours; the ordinary (eighteen-pounder) frigate *Pomone*, and the ordinary frigate *Tenedos*. There was also a brig, but it had no part in the fight.

It was just before daylight when the enemy were seen. Decatur hauled up to the wind and headed for the east end of Long Island, but the *President* was seen by the British and the

whole squadron went after her. The good judgment of Captain Hayes was going to win him a ship. As the *President* stood away, the *Majestic* and the *Endymion* were directly astern, with the *Pomone* on the port and the *Tenedos* on the starboard quarter. The wind still held strong, and the *Majestic* led the *Endymion* and gained on the *President* enough to warrant an occasional shot. Then the wind slackened and the *Pomone* outsailed all the rest, until Captain Hayes blundered by supposing the *Tenedos* was also a Yankee and sent the *Pomone* after her, thus prolonging the chase of the *President.*

However, in the afternoon the wind became light and baffling, and this was the weather for the *Endymion.* Decatur had done everything possible to lighten ship except throwing over his guns. Anchors, boats, spare spars, provisions, and water had all been thrown overboard, but in vain, and soon after 4 o'clock the *Endymion* was firing her bow chasers and the *President* her stern chasers with some effect. The *Endymion*, proving the swifter, was able to reach forward until on the *President's* quarter. There she could shoot the *President* to pieces without receiving a shot in return, and for half an hour she held that position, while Decatur held on, hoping the *Endymion* would range up for a close conflict.

But no such move as that was in the mind

of the Englishman. Captain Hope, who commanded her, was not guilty of the "uncircumspect gallantry" of which Sir Howard Douglas wrote so feelingly. So Decatur determined on a desperate move. Calling the crew aft, he addressed them, so it is said, as follows :

"My lads, that ship is coming up with us. As our ship won't sail we'll go on board of theirs, every man and boy of us, and carry her into New York. All I ask of you is to follow me. This is a favorite ship of the country. If we allow her to be taken we shall be deserted by our wives and sweethearts. What! let such a ship as this go for nothing! 'Twould break the heart of every pretty girl in New York."

The crew responded with three cheers and ran to the braces. The *President* came around on the other tack. But she did not get on board the *Endymion*, for her prudent captain tacked her as soon as he saw the sails of the *President* lift. This is not to say that he was a coward ; he merely was not "uncircumspect." He was "wary" enough to hold the advantage his good ship gave him.

By dusk, however, Decatur found the *Endymion* broad off to starboard, and a fierce cannonade followed at musket-range. The Americans fired rigging-cutting shot as well as round, and one of the chain-shot stripped the entire foresail from the *Endymion*. And as for the

The *President* Engaging the *Endymion*, while Pursued by the British Squadron.
From a wood-cut in the "Naval Monument."

round shot, they played such havoc with masts and guns that the *Endymion* was well-nigh wrecked, while her fire was entirely stopped. She was, in short, whipped. Decatur might now have exchanged ships with Captain Hope, without material difficulty, but that would now avail nothing because she was too badly crippled to escape the others. So he had to turn once more to fly.

But this was a hopeless effort, because the *President* had been crippled too badly on the bar to outsail the others. Moreover, he had lost several of his best officers. First Lieutenant Fitz-Henry Babbitt was standing near a hatch when a cannon-ball took off his right leg and he pitched head-first down the hatch. His leg was broken anew and his skull was fractured, yet he lived two hours and dictated messages to his friends before he died.

Lieutenant Archibald Hamilton (son of the former Secretary of the Navy)—he who had carried the *Macedonian's* flag to Washington—was cut in two by another round shot as he stepped to speak to Second Lieutenant John Temple Shubrick. And then as the *Endymion's* fire slackened, Lieutenant Edward F. Howell was killed. He was leaning over the rail looking away at the dim outline of the *Endymion* when he said to Midshipman Emmet:

"Well, we've whipped that ship, at any rate."

Just then a single gun flashed from the frigate and he continued:

"No, there she is——" But he never finished the sentence, for a grape-shot crashed through his brain killing him instantly. And that was the last gun fired from the *Endymion.*

In turning to fly, Decatur squared away before the wind and set studding-sails just as a heavy mass of clouds obscured the moon. In doing so he turned the stern of the *President* directly toward the *Endymion*, and he was so close to her that she might have raked him terribly. The fact that she did not fire a shot then proves that she could not. For two hours Decatur ran without seeing the enemy, but when the clouds cleared away (it was then 11 o'clock at night) he found both the *Pomone* and the *Tenedos* within point-blank range. "The *Pomone* opened her fire on the port bow, within musket-shot, the other about two cables' lengths astern, and the rest, with the exception of the *Endymion*, within gunshot. Thus situated, with about one-fifth of my crew killed and wounded, my ship crippled, and a more than fourfold force opposed to me, without a chance of escape, I deemed it my duty to surrender." So wrote Decatur. He hauled down the flag after the first broadside of the *Pomone.*

The officers of the *Pomone* did not see that

the flag was down and fired again, when Decatur shouted:

"She means to sink us. To your quarters, my lads, and renew your fire!"

But before they got their guns cast loose the *Tenedos* ranged up on the other side and hailed:

"What ship is that?"

Decatur replied:

"The American frigate *President*. We have surrendered."

The *Tenedos* sent a boat and took possession, but Decatur gave his sword to Captain John Hayes, of the *Majestic*, that was soon alongside. Hayes, of course, returned it with the usual complimentary speech.

Although the facts of the movements in battle here given appear in the British histories —although it is admitted that both the *Pomone* and the *Tenedos* were beside the *President* before Decatur surrendered—the British historians treat the battle as a victory won by the *Endymion*, and print a table showing the relative forces of the two ships! And Allen, in his table, prints the number of the crew of the *Endymion* as three hundred and nineteen, although he says in the body of his story that her crew numbered "three hundred and nineteen men and twenty-seven boys." The number of officers carried in addition to these is not given.

Tenedos. *President.* *Pomone.*

Capture of the *President* by a British Squadron.

From a rare lithograph.

And the British Government, to perpetuate the idea that the *Endymion* captured the *President*, gave her captain a gold medal and promoted her executive officer.

However, Rear-Admiral H. Hotham, in reporting her capture to Vice-Admiral Cochrane, said: "I have the honor to acquaint you with the capture of the United States ship *President* by the following force, *viz.:* the *Majestic*, Captain Hayes; the *Tenedos*, Captain Hyde Parker; the *Endymion*, Captain Hope; the *Pomone*, Captain Lumley." Further than that, all these ships shared in the prize-money. To this may be added the words of Admiral Cochrane, at a public dinner, some years later, when some younger British officers were felicitating themselves on the victory, as they called it, of the *Endymion.*

"The *President* was completely mobbed," he said.

But when all this is said—when it is proved by the enemy's reports that a squadron captured the *President*—it is perfectly clear to an impartial mind, as Roosevelt says, that Decatur "acted rather tamely, certainly not heroically, in striking to the *Pomone.*"

Because the American Navy was insignificant in the number of its ships when compared with the enemy—because it always will be comparatively small in numbers—*it is the duty of every*

American officer to fight as long as he can float and fire a gun.

Jeremiah O'Brien, with his Machias haymakers on a merchant-sloop, points his finger at Stephen Decatur with a well-disciplined crew on the man-of-war.

As the *President* did all of her fighting with the *Endymion* and surrendered as soon as the other two frigates were upon her, the losses on both are interesting. The *President* lost twenty-four killed and fifty-five wounded. The *Endymion* lost eleven killed and fourteen wounded. Since the *President* threw 765 pounds of shot to the *Endymion's* 680, the difference in casualties seems remarkable until it is noted that the *President* fired chiefly at the *Endymion's* rigging—it was a fight to escape on the part of the *President* after it was found the *Endymion* could not be boarded. Decatur crippled the *Endymion* until she was thrown out of the battle absolutely. He could have chosen his position and shot her to pieces had she been alone. He "incidentally killed eleven men." The *Endymion's* gunners aimed lower, and killed more. The battle lasted two hours and a half.

The *President* was carried to the Bermudas. There a newspaper called the *Gazette* printed an article so scandalous that the British officers compelled the editor to publish a retraction, and a pugnacious midshipman, R. B. Randolph, of

the *President*, publicly thrashed him. But the articles in this newspaper are used by the historian James in writing the story of the capture.

On the way to the Bermudas a gale came on, when the *President* was dismasted. The *Endymion* was not only dismasted but had to throw over all the guns (short thirty-twos) on her forecastle and quarter-deck. The *President* was so badly strained when on the bar at Sandy Hook that she was never commissioned in the British Navy. But, although she had been derisively called "the waggon" while she carried the American flag, her lines were followed by her captors in building new ships after she was taken, and so, too, was her style of armament.

It is interesting, in view of the changes in British naval ideas which the two American frigates they captured wrought, to note that in Peake's "Rudiments of Naval Architecture," a British work, formerly a text-book in all English-speaking navies, the ideal frigate there described has a gun-deck length of one hundred and seventy-six feet, a breadth of fifty-two feet, and a depth of hold of only seventeen feet—which, if slang be permitted, is "seeing" the American model and "going several better." The *President* was one hundred and seventy-five feet long by forty-five broad and twenty deep. And as for guns, while the Yankees of 1812 used long twenty-fours for the main-deck

battery, to the infinite amusement as well as the scorn of the British, Peake's ideal frigate carried six long eight-inch guns (sixty-eight-pounders!) and twenty-two long thirty-twos, besides twenty-two thirty-twos on the upper deck that were only a foot shorter than those below. Thus they had, with experience, added to the weight of the broadside they found on the *President* one hundred and forty-three pounds, and by the use of long upper-deck guns they had vastly increased the effectiveness of a broadside.

CHAPTER X

THE NAVY AT THE BATTLE OF NEW ORLEANS

THE BRITISH GRAB AT THE VALLEY OF THE MISSISSIPPI—STOPPED AT LAKE BORGNE BY THE YANKEE GUNBOATS UNDER LIEUTENANT THOMAS AP CATESBY JONES—THE BRITISH CAME FIVE TO ONE IN NUMBERS AND ALMOST FOUR TO ONE IN WEIGHT OF METAL—DEFENDING THE *SEAHORSE* WITH FOURTEEN MEN AGAINST ONE HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-FIVE—THE FULL BRITISH FORCE DRIVEN UPON TWO GUNBOATS—A MOST HEROIC DEFENCE THAT LASTED, IN SPITE OF OVERWHELMING ODDS, MORE THAN ONE HOUR—INDOMITABLE SAILING-MASTER GEORGE ULRICH—A FIGHT, THE MEMORY OF WHICH STILL HELPS TO PRESERVE THE PEACE—WORK OF THE *CAROLINE* AND THE *LOUISIANA*.

SMALL space is given in ordinary histories to the doings of the Navy in connection with the defence of New Orleans, when it was attacked by the British at the end of the War of 1812. As the reader will remember, the expedition against New Orleans was planned for the purpose of wresting from the United States the whole valley of the Mississippi. As France had endeavored in the eighteenth century to establish an empire, extending from the Great Lakes through the Mississippi water-shed to the

Gulf of Mexico, that should hem in the British colonies on the Atlantic, so now the English strove to gain possession of what has become the heart of the American republic. The reader has only to consider what would have been the consequences of British possession of the metropolis of the Louisiana purchase to understand how the British Government has always looked ahead when seeking for territorial aggrandizement.

From an American point of view this expedition against New Orleans was infamous, for the reason that ministers representing both nations were negotiating a treaty of peace at Ghent when the order for the attack was issued. As one reads of the strength of the force sent to accomplish this work, it seems invincible. "A great fleet of war-vessels—ships-of-the-line, frigates, and sloops—under Admiral Cochrane was convoying a still larger fleet of troop-ships, with some ten thousand fighting men, chiefly the fierce and hardy veterans of the Peninsula War, who had been trained for seven years in the stern school of the Iron Duke, and who were now led by one of the bravest and ablest of all Wellington's brave and able lieutenants, Sir Edward Packenham."

Favored by wind and weather, the leaders of this fleet—the line-of-battle ships and frigates—reached the Chandeleur Islands on Decem-

Sir Edward Michael Packenham.

From an etching by Rosenthal of a print in the collection of Mr. Clarence S. Bement.

ber 8, 1814, and came to anchor. They reviewed the ground that lay between them and the city they intended to take, and they found that the current of the great river was too

strong for their wind-borne ships. So another, and apparently an easier, route was chosen—the route through the inlets and bayous of which the breadth of water called Lake Borgne was the most conspicuous feature. It was a landlocked route with a sufficient depth of water to float boats and transports, and the sole obstruction that the Americans could offer to the mighty host of invaders was a fleet of five gun-boats and two tiny tenders, one a schooner and one a sloop, that together could offer a broadside of fourteen guns, including a number of insignificant (short) six-pounders, the whole throwing two hundred and twelve pounds of metal, and manned by one hundred and ninety-four men, all told, under the command of Lieutenant Thomas ap Catesby Jones.

Very quickly the British admiral discovered these seven boats, and on December 12th sent a force to destroy them. With the emphatic assertion of the favorite British historian James in mind—the assertion that "the British, when engaged in expeditions of this nature, always rest their hopes of success upon valor rather than on numbers"—what does the uninformed reader suppose was the strength of this expedition? Whatever the supposition may be, the fact is that even James admits that it included no less than forty-two launches, all armed with carronades, chiefly twenty-four and eighteen-

pounders, but some carrying twelve-pounders —forty-two launches, carrying guns that threw not less than seven hundred and fifty-eight pounds of shot at a single discharge, and *manned by nine hundred and eighty men picked from among the ships of the squadron.*

Lieutenant Jones saw the barge squadron approaching, and recognized that its force was overwhelming, but he was in no way dismayed. He might have run his gun-boats ashore and burned them without discredit, but he chose to fight instead. Sending one of his little tenders, called the *Seahorse*, that carried one six-pounder and fourteen men, to destroy some stores at Bay St. Louis, he tried to carry his five gun-boats to Les Petites Coquilles, where they would have the support of a small fort. He failed to do this because the wind was baffling and the current strong. So he anchored his boats in line across Malheureux Island Passage and there awaited the enemy.

In the meantime the British had seen the *Seahorse* moored under the bank at Bay St. Louis, and they sent seven launches to take her. She carried, as told, one six-pounder and a crew of fourteen, commanded by Sailing-master William Johnson. There were two six-pounders on shore to help her. On came the British with their seven launches, armed with guns of which the least was a twelve-pounder, and

manned by at least one hundred and seventy-five men. They came on with a dash until Johnson opened fire and then they stopped and tried the virtues of their seven cannon. But "it appears that after sustaining a very destructive fire for nearly half an hour, the boats were repulsed." So says James.

The Americans, with three six-pounders, had beaten off nearly two hundred picked British seamen armed with seven guns, of which the least was a twelve-pounder!

However, the British did not give it up alto-

gether. They got reinforcements—the exact number of boats is not given—and returned, when Johnson destroyed his boat and the stores on shore and made a good retreat. Allen does not even mention this attack on the *Seahorse*. At about the same time the *Alligator*, the other tender to the main fleet, while trying to reach the gun-boats, was surrounded by the British fleet. Sailing-master Sheppard commanded her, and she carried one gun and a crew of eight men, all told. Mr. Sheppard surrendered.

As ill-luck would have it, after Lieutenant Jones had anchored his fleet of gun-boats in line, the strong current in the channel caused two of them—Number 156, which Jones himself commanded, and Number 163, commanded by Sailing-master George Ulrich—to drag their anchors until they were about one hundred yards below the rest of the fleet. This happened at 3 o'clock on the morning of December 14, 1814. It was a most serious misfortune, because the two were thus deprived of the efficient support of the other three. And before the two could regain their positions in line the full force of the British fleet came upon them.

Seeing the Americans were vigilant, Captain Lockyer anchored his squadron, served breakfast, gave the men time to smoke and rest, and then ordered the advance. Captain Lockyer

himself led the way, and with two other barges strove to board Number 156, where Jones commanded. For the moment it was a force of not less than seventy-five against the forty-one under Jones. But not one of them got over the rail of the gun-boat. Almost every man in Lockyer's barge was killed or wounded, Lockyer himself being severely hurt; and as for the two other barges, both were sunk.

But a whelming host had come. There were thirty-nine well-manned boats left to continue the attack, and this entire host was concentrated on the two gun-boats that had drifted down from the original line. They surrounded the two as a pack of hounds surround a fox. They rushed in until they felt the teeth of the bayed; they backed off and barked, and rushed in again, only to be beaten off once more by the desperate crew fighting under an indomitable leader. In a little time that leader was cut down, but another as heroic—Midshipman George Parker—took his place, and with equal gallantry and skill continued the fight. Almost the entire British force was now directed at the flag-boat. With their great guns they hailed grape and canister at short range, and again and again sought to carry it by boarding, only to be driven off, until at last Parker, too, fell wounded and wholly disabled. The boarding-nets had now been shot away.

The crew was cut to pieces and there was no longer any officer to direct them. And yet when the British, seeing the advantage gained, made a last rush, these sailors stood to their posts until the sheer weight of numbers—a dozen of the enemy on one man—bore them down.

Repeating for the sake of emphasis that there were, for the time, forty-two boats against two, how long does the uninformed reader suppose those American heroes held out against the hosts that swarmed to the rails? To the honor of the flag be it said that the firing began at 10.50 o'clock and it was not until 12.10 o'clock that the British were able to carry the deck of Number 156. *For more than one hour the Americans had held the ship.* And Sailing-master George Ulrich in Number 163, the smallest of the American fleet, did still better. For although he had at the beginning but twenty-one men on his boat, he was still fighting when the flag-boat was captured, and he did not surrender until her guns were turned upon him.

The heart of the Americans was broken when the flag came down on these two, for the full force of the now victorious squadron was turned on the three above. Nevertheless, it was not until 12.30 o'clock that the last boat surrendered. It had taken nine hundred and eighty men with forty-two great guns one hour and

forty minutes to whip the one hundred and seventy-two men on the five Yankee gun-boats.

There was the usual Court of Inquiry to determine how it was that these five boats were lost. The officers and seamen of the little fleet were examined separately under oath, and when the evidence was all in, it was declared that "the action has added another and distinguished honor to the naval character of our country."

The Americans lost six men killed and thirty-five wounded. The British historians admit that their loss was seventeen killed and seventy-seven wounded. The American officers estimated the British loss at nearly three hundred, and when we recall the deliberation as well as desperation of the American resistance, and the length of time that the little force held out, it is safe to say that the American estimate was much nearer the truth than the British report. For it is not possible that so small a loss as ninety-four in killed and wounded could hold in check nine hundred and eighty men under determined officers for more than one hour. Among the British wounded were one captain, five lieutenants, three master's mates, and seven midshipmen. The killed on the British side included three midshipmen.

The American gun-boats, though few by count and insignificant in the number of their men, when compared with the British hosts, had

nevertheless served not only to check the advance of the enemy at a time when every day gained for preparing to defend the city was precious, but to give the arrogant enemy a foretaste of the character of the resistance that was to be met at the city, and it was a foretaste that remained in the mouth.

Besides the little fleet of gun-boats on the bayous, the Americans had two war-vessels in the river. One was the schooner *Caroline*, Master-Commandant Daniel T. Patterson, that mounted six short twelves on each side and one long twelve on a pivot. After the British had effected a landing and were encamped at Villeré's plantation on the Mississippi below the city, the *Caroline* dropped down with the current until opposite the British camp. It was on December 23, 1814, and at 7 o'clock at night that she left the city. The position taken was so close in to the camp that the British heard the orders given on her deck distinctly. They hailed her but got no answer. Then they fired some muskets at her, but these had no effect until at 8 o'clock, when they heard a voice say :

"Give them this for the honor of America."

A broadside of grape-shot followed that threw the British camp into confusion. As a British account says :

"An incessant cannonade was then kept up

which could not be silenced, for our people had no artillery, and a few rockets that were discharged deviated so much from their object as to afford only amusement for the enemy. Under such circumstances, therefore, all were ordered to leave their fires and shelter themselves under the dikes, where they lay each as he could find room, listening in painful silence to the iron hail among the boats and to the shrieks and groans of those that were wounded."

By the 27th of the month, however, the British got a heavy battery of five guns located where it would bear on the schooner, while the schooner could only reply with the long twelve. Then they opened on her with red-hot shot. There was a northerly wind blowing to help the current. The schooner could not retreat up river against it, and to go down stream was to fall in with British ships. After a loss of seven killed and wounded she was fired and abandoned.

The other American ship was the *Louisiana*, carrying eight long twenty-fours on each side. She was valuable in annoying the British when they were advancing on the city, during which time she is said to have thrown eight hundred shot among them. And in the battle that followed, on January 8, 1815, she served as guard to the American flank.

CHAPTER XI

ONCE MORE THE *CONSTITUTION*

SHE WAS A LONG TIME IDLE IN PORT—A TOUCHING TALE OF SENTIMENT—AWAY AT LAST—CAPTAIN STEWART'S PRESENTIMENT—FOUND TWO OF THE ENEMY AS HE HAD PREDICTED—A BATTLE WHERE THE YANKEE SHOWED MASTERY OF THE SEAMAN'S ART—CAPTAIN STEWART SETTLED A DISPUTE—CAUGHT NAPPING IN PORTO PRAYA—SWIFT WORK GETTING TO SEA—A MOST REMARKABLE CHASE—THREE BRITISH FRIGATES IN CHASE OF TWO YANKEE CHOSE TO FOLLOW THE SMALLER WHEN THE TWO SPLIT TACKS—ASTOUNDING EXHIBIT OF BAD MARKSMANSHIP—A CAUSE OF SUICIDE—THE POEM THAT SAVED *OLD IRONSIDES*.

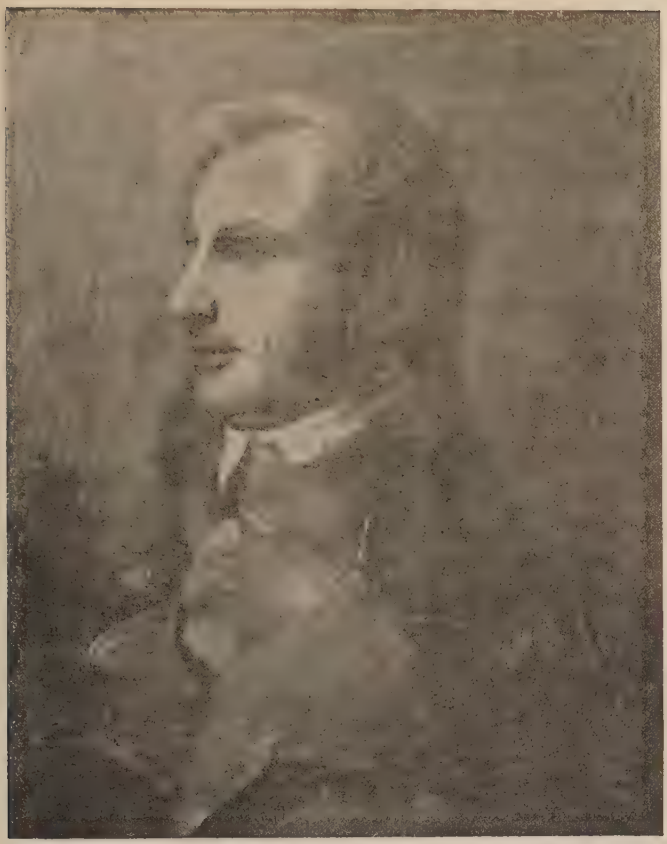
For almost two years, and long and weary ones they were to the ambitious officers connected with her, the famous old frigate *Constitution* lay idle in the port of Boston, while the ships of less repute in the Navy were telling the world of the prowess of Yankee seamen when fighting for freedom. She had been found in such a state of decay on her return from her combat with the British frigate *Java*, that it was necessary to haul her out and rebuild her.

More than half of her crew were transferred

to the Great Lakes, and, as has been told, some of them were on Lake Erie to help Perry win lasting fame, while some saw Chauncey fill and back in the presence of Sir James Yeo on Lake Ontario.

However, in December, 1813, she was ready for sea, and with a new crew of well-selected men under Captain Charles Stewart, she sailed on a little cruise that neither added to nor detracted from her fame. Leaving Boston on the 30th of the month, she was for seventeen days at sea without seeing a sail. On February 14th, however, on the coast of Surinam, she overhauled the British war-schooner *Picton*, of sixteen guns, which she captured together with a letter of marque that was in convoy. It is perhaps worth noting that the difference between a letter of marque and a privateer is this: while both are licensed to prey on the enemy, the principal business of the letter of marque is to carry cargo.

On working her way homeward the *Constitution* fell in with the thirty-six-gun British frigate *La Pique*, Captain Maitland, off Porto Rico. Time had been, and that not so long before, when a British frigate of that size would have come booming down on the *Constitution* eager for a fight. But the results of a few such boomings had taken the "uncircumspect gallantry" out of the British Admiralty if not out



Charles Stewart.
From a painting by Sully, at the Naval Academy, Annapolis.

of all the British commanders. Captain Maitland had written orders not to engage a ship of the weight of the *Constitution*, and he up-helm and ran for it. Night coming on, he escaped through Mona passage. James says that the crew of *La Pique* felt so very badly when they

found that they were to run instead of fight, that they positively refused to take their evening's allowance of grog.

The *Constitution* arrived off Cape Ann on April 3, 1814, and there found the two big British frigates *Junon* and *Tenedos* in chase of her. By throwing over provisions and starting her water the *Constitution* reached the harbor of Marblehead. This port was undefended by

The *Constitution's* Escape from the *Tenedos* and *Junon*.
From an old wood-cut.

forts, and it is asserted by the British that Captain Parker, of the *Tenedos*, wanted to go in and have a fight, but was prevented by Captain Upton, of the *Junon*, who was the ranking officer. In any event, they did not go in nor did they prevent the *Constitution* leaving Marblehead for Salem soon afterward. Then she returned to Boston once more and there she re-

mained until December 17, 1814, when she sailed out of Boston, still under command of Captain Stewart, while the blockading ships were temporarily off port. And then came the cruise in which, as Maclay says, "she achieved her greatest triumph and performed her most brilliant service."

The news that "the *Constitution* is again cruising," was quickly learned on the blockading squadron on its return to the station, for the British had spies a-plenty in all American ports, and especially among the Federalist party in New England. The dread announcement was sent by every passing British vessel in all directions, "and thereafter British ships-of-the-line maintained a double lookout, and their smaller frigates sailed in couples, while their sloops-of-war stood away from every sail that bore the least resemblance to the *Constitution*."

On December 24th, off the Bermudas, the British merchant-ship *Lord Nelson* was taken. She sailed thence by the way of the Madeiras to the Portuguese coast, and there "for several days cruised within sight of the Rock of Lisbon." Here, on February 18, 1815, Captain Stewart went in chase of the big liner *Elizabeth* without knowing what he was after, but he left her to follow a smaller sail seen a little later, and so fell in with a British merchant-ship, the *Susan*, which was taken.

Meantime, the British liner arrived at Lisbon, where he learned that the *Constitution* was off-shore. And as it happened, the British frigate *Tiber* was there and the *Tiber* was commanded by the Captain Dacres who had been so handsomely beaten in the *Guerrière* by the *Constitution* under Hull. Straightway the two started in chase of the Yankee, but they never had the satisfaction of overtaking her. For the *Constitution*, with equal, if not greater, speed, was returning once more down-wind toward the Madeiras.

A right curious story of this passage is told by Richard Watson Gilder in "Hours at Home." He says that, on February 19th, while a group of lieutenants were standing on the quarter-deck of the *Constitution* talking about the fact that they had met no enemy of equal force during the cruise, and calling it ill-luck, they were approached by Captain Stewart, who had overheard their talk. He said :

"I assure you, gentlemen, that before the sun again rises and sets, you will be engaged in battle with the enemy, and it will not be with a single ship."

Captain Stewart was a man subject to presentiments. He believed in them, and this one foreshadowed a combat such as he described and within the time-limit.

By noon of the next day (February 20, 1815) the *Constitution* had arrived within one hun-

dred and eighty miles of Madeira, which then bore southwest-by-west. A light easterly breeze was drifting over the water, and the sky was cloudy, when at 1 o'clock in the afternoon a sail was seen a little on the port bow. Hauling the *Constitution* up to the point, Captain Stewart made all sail in chase, and an hour later discovered a second sail in company with, but beyond, the first. By this time the first ship's hull was above the horizon, and because of false ports painted on her side she had somewhat of the look of a fifty-gun ship. When this was suggested by a lieutenant to Captain Stewart, however, he replied that she did not look as large as that, and then added:

"Be this as it may, you know I promised you a fight before the setting of to-day's sun, and if we do not take it now that it is offered, we can scarcely have another chance. We must flog them when we catch them, whether she has one gun-deck or two!"

As it appeared later on, the first of these sails was the small British frigate *Cyane*, Captain Thomas Gordon Falcon, and the second the ship-rigged sloop-of-war *Levant*, Captain the Honorable George Douglas. Both were standing to the north and east with the wind coming in over the starboard bow, the smaller vessel being several miles away astern and in the lee of the larger one.

As the *Constitution*, with her studding-sails bellying aloft, came driving down the wind, the *Cyane* began signalling to her consort, and a little later (it was just after 4 o'clock) she up with her helm and, wearing around, spread all her sails to join the *Levant*.

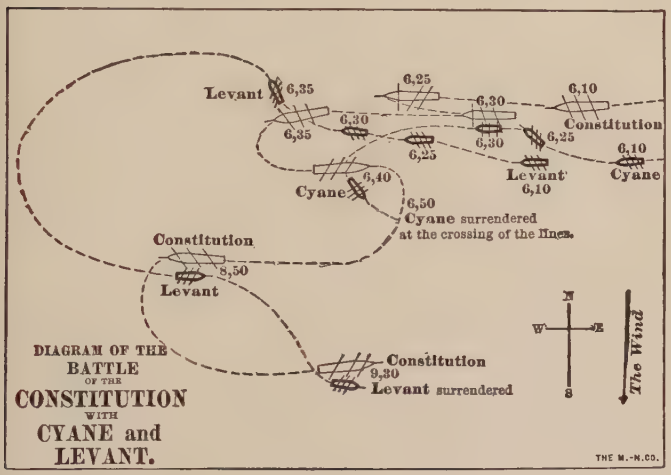
The very beautiful chase that followed was prolonged, rather than shortened, by a freshening breeze, because under the pressure of its wide-spread canvas the *Constitution's* main-royalmast broke off at the eyes of the top-gallant rigging, and for maybe fifteen minutes there was a lively time aloft in getting a new mast up and the canvas pulling once more.

She had held her own with the *Cyane*, even while crippled, and when all sail was once more spread the *Constitution* quickly overhauled the little British frigate and at 5 o'clock tried a few shots at her with the bow-chasers, all of which, however, fell short.

So the *Cyane* arrived unhurt alongside of her consort, the *Levant*, where both determined to fight the Yankee frigate, and stripped down to fighting canvas. A moment later they seemed to have thought it advisable to put off the combat until night should come, in order to get the advantage of manœuvring in the dark, and they once more up-helm and made sail. But they soon saw that the *Constitution* was upon them—that no delay was possible—and

coming back to the starboard tack, with sails rap full, they formed in line, the little frigate *Cyane* about two hundred yards astern of the *Levant*, and so awaited the *Constitution*.

The *Constitution* had come ploughing down with the wind over her port quarter. As she arrived opposite the two ships she stripped off her canvas, as a fighter his shirt, and wearing around she ranged up on the starboard tack



to windward of the two Britishers, and at 6.10 o'clock, with the *Cyane* two hundred and fifty yards away on the port quarter, and the *Levant* as far away on the port bow, opened fire on both. The plucky seamen of the British ships replied instantly, and for fifteen minutes every gun on all three ships that could be brought to

bear was worked with the fiercest energy. The huge cloud of smoke that arose from the Yankee guns completely fogged in the enemy, but the enemy's fire had notably slackened away, and Captain Stewart ordered his men to cease firing in order that he might see where the enemy lay.

As the smoke drifted down-wind, the spars of the sloop *Levant* were disclosed right abeam. The *Constitution* had forged ahead in the fifteen minutes' firing, and she had the *Levant* directly under her guns. But because the *Constitution* had forged ahead, the *Cyane* had obtained a little more sea-room, as well as immunity from the fire of the *Constitution*, and she was just beginning to luff up across the *Constitution's* stern when the thinning smoke revealed her.

An opportunity for a most beautiful display of Yankee seamanship had come. Firing a staggering blow from double-shotted guns at the *Levant* off his lee beam, Captain Stewart threw the sails on the *Constitution's* main and mizzen masts flat aback, and then bracing in the foresails till they just fluttered in the breeze, he drove her stern on, back across the bow of the luffing English frigate, and raking her fore and aft, compelled her to fill away. Then after partly filling his sails, to keep the *Constitution* beside the enemy, he fired such deadly broad-

sides into her that the men were driven from her guns, and her fire almost ceased. As a right good song says:

Then a lifting rift in the mist showed up
The stout *Cyane* close-hauled
To swing in our wake and our quarter rake,
And a boasting Briton bawled:

"Starboard or larboard we've got him fast
Where his heels won't take him through;
Let him luff or wear, he'll find us there—
Ho, Yankee! Which will you do?"

We did not luff and we did not wear,
But braced our top-sails back,
Till the sternway drew in fair and true
Broadsides athwart her track.

Athwart her track and across her bows
We raked her fore and aft,
And out of the fight and into the night
Drifted the beaten craft.

But at 6.35 o'clock a new complication had arisen. The *Levant*, lying ahead of her consort, *Cyane*, and out of the fire of the *Constitution*, began to luff up where she could rake the Yankee. But the wakeful Captain Stewart had his eyes on her, and as she sailed up to cross the *Constitution's* bows he rapidly filled the *Constitution's* sails, put his helm up, bluffed the *Cyane* down to leeward, and, running forward, crossed under the stern of the *Levant* and gave her two raking broadsides in swift succession.

For the moment the *Levant* had had enough, and sheeting home her top-gallant sails, she sped away from the giant Yankee.

At that the little frigate *Cyane* began to wear around before the wind as if to escape also, but the Yankee wore around after her with greater speed, and crossing her stern from starboard to port, raked her much as the *Levant* had been raked. At that the *Cyane* came farther around and fired her port battery into the starboard bow of the *Constitution*, but when, at exactly 6.50 o'clock, the *Constitution* ranged up beside her, she hauled down her flag. It was just forty minutes since the action at close range began. Second Lieutenant B. V. Hoffman, of the *Constitution*, was at once sent to take charge of the *Cyane*.

This much accomplished, the *Constitution* stood up-wind in chase of the *Levant*, that had made sail to get out of the fight, and soon saw her coming "very gallantly back to find out his friend's condition." Here, indeed, was the "uncircumspect gallantry" of which Sir Howard Douglas speaks. For the *Levant* met the *Constitution* at 8.50 o'clock, just two hours after the *Cyane* had surrendered. Captain the Honorable George Douglas should have known that the little frigate *Cyane* could have had no hope in the fight alone with the giant Yankee —that he himself would have still less in return-

Action of the *Constitution* with the *Cyane* and *Levant.*
From an aquatint by Strickland.

ing. It was a foolhardy movement, yet one that necessarily appeals for sympathy to the fighting men of both nations. The *Levant* luffed to pass to windward of the *Constitution*, failed, passed to leeward, and the two exchanged broadsides. Then the *Levant* spread everything to escape, but the *Constitution* wore around in chase, and by 9.30 was sending shot from her bow-chasers into the fleeing Englishman. At that the *Levant* also hauled down her flag.

As the *Levant's* flag came down, John Lancey, of Cape Ann, one of the *Constitution's* men, was dying under the surgeon's hands. The surgeon had told him that death was near, and the man replied :

"Yes, sir, I know it. But I only want to hear that the other ship has struck."

A moment later the Yankees on deck began to cheer, and, hearing them, Lancey raised his head, waved an arm that had been partly shot away, gave three feeble cheers, and fell back dead.

Another tale of the battle says that after the British captains were in the *Constitution's* cabin a midshipman came in to ask Captain Stewart if the men could have their evening grog. As the time for serving it had passed before the battle began, Captain Stewart asked if they had not had it already, and the midship-

man replied, to the astonishment of the Englishmen:

"No, sir. It was mixed ready for serving just before the battle began, but the older sailors of the crew said they didn't want any 'Dutch courage' on board and capsized the grog-tub in the lee scuppers."

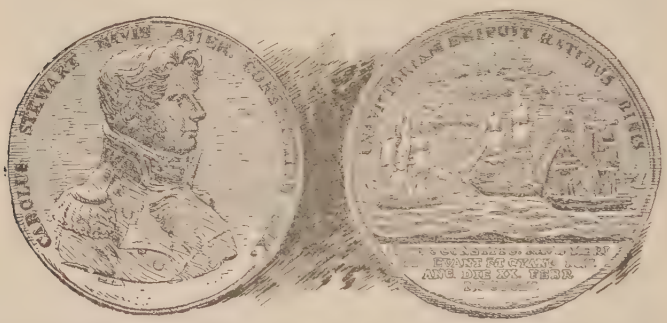
Later still the two Englishmen, according to Gilder, got into a heated dispute, each blaming the other for making manœuvres that lost the battle, but Stewart stopped the quarrel. He said:

"Gentlemen, there is no use in getting warm about it; it would have been all the same whatever you might have done. If you doubt that, I will put you all on board again and you can try it over."

As to the relative force, Allen says that the *Cyane* was of a class known as "donkey frigates," and that she carried twenty-two short thirty-twos on the main deck and eight short eighteens and two nines on quarter-deck and forecastle. Lieutenant Hoffman, who took charge of her, says she had two more short eighteens. This is no doubt the truth of the matter. It is agreed that the *Levant* carried eighteen short thirty-twos, two long nines, and a short twelve that could be worked on either side. The two together carried a crew of three hundred and twenty, of whom thirty-nine were

boys, according to Allen. The combined crews could fire a broadside of seven hundred and fifty-four pounds to the *Constitution's* six hundred and forty-four pounds net weight. Without mentioning the *Constitution's* number of men, which was at most four hundred and fifty-six, we can concede what Allen claims, the "immense superiority" of the Yankee. For not only were the long twenty-fours of the *Constitution* far and away better than the short thirty-twos of the British ships, just as the long guns of the *Phœbe* and *Cherub* were superior to the short guns of the *Essex* at Valparaiso: the crew of the *Constitution* had been trained very much better than any ordinary British crew. More important still, the force of the *Constitution* was concentrated in a single ship under the command of one able man. The force of the British was divided between two ships and could not be so well handled. When the British Court of Inquiry at Halifax "applauded" the British officers "for the gallant defence each had made," it did something which an American writer finds pleasure in placing before American readers. But when, as Allen relates, "the Court also expressed to the remaining crew of the *Cyane*, in the strongest terms, the sense entertained of their determined loyalty in resisting the temptations held out by the enemy to draw them from their allegiance, which they

retained also under circumstances of almost unprecedented severity exercised toward them whilst on board the *Constitution*," it placed on its records a falsehood. The charge was false on its face, for the lowest count of the crew of the *Constitution*, after the battle, as printed in any American work, gives her four hundred and forty-four men, of whom ten, at most, were wounded more or less. After manning her prizes she still had an ample crew to work the



Medal Awarded to Charles Stewart after the Battle of the *Constitution* with the *Cyane* and *Levant*.

ship and man another prize or two. Because the Yankee sailors were treated like men, were well-fed and well-paid, the Yankee frigates in this war, with the exception of the black-listed *Chesapeake*, were fully manned. There was no occasion for recruiting among the British prisoners. Moreover, when this falsehood was first published, the officers of the *Constitution* denied under oath the charge, and said further,

that, instead of trying to seduce the British crews, many of the British seamen volunteered to ship on board the *Constitution* but were in no case permitted to do so, because "the loss of the *Chesapeake* had taught us the danger of having renegades aboard."

The *Constitution* lost six killed and nine more or less wounded. The donkey frigate *Cyane* lost twelve killed and twenty-six wounded out of her crew of one hundred and eighty; the *Levant* lost seven killed and sixteen wounded out of one hundred and forty. The British gunners did about as poorly as usual in their Navy of that day. The Yankee gunners did rather worse than usual. They were at close range long enough to sink both of the enemy's ships had they done as well as the *Hornet's* crew did with the British *Peacock*, or the *Wasp* with the British *Avon*. The battle was, and is, famous not for its gunnery, but for the magnificent manner in which Captain Stewart handled his ship. Other captains—Hull and Bainbridge, for instance—had handled her when a single enemy turned and twisted and forereached, but Stewart backed and filled and reached and wore to meet the manœuvres of two ships that, commanded by the ablest of British seamen, strove to cross and rake him. And not only did he meet their movements—not only did he avoid a raking himself, but he

raked each of them repeatedly. No better seamanship was ever displayed.

By hard work after the battle, the Yankee seamen got all three ships in sailing order before 2 o'clock next morning, and they sailed to Porto Praya, in the island of St. Jago, Cape de Verde, where they arrived on March 10, 1815. Here a merchant brig was employed as a cartel to carry the prisoners. The next day came on with a thick fog lying low over the water while the air above the top-gallant yards was comparatively clear. The Americans were busy at 12.05 o'clock (noon) transferring the prisoners, when a large sail was seen from the deck standing into the harbor. There was plainly no lookout aloft, and Captain Stewart was well-nigh caught napping.

Stewart, however, was cool enough for the emergency, and had all hands called to their quarters to go out and meet the new ship, but when this was done two other huge sails were seen and it became evident that three large frigates were coming into the harbor. As was eventually learned, they were the fifty-gun frigate *Newcastle*, Captain Lord George Stewart; the fifty-gun frigate *Leander*, Captain Sir Ralph Collier, K.C.B., and the forty-gun *Acasta*, Captain Robert Kerr, ships that should have been blockading Boston when the *Constitution* escaped. Either of the larger ships was an over-

match for the *Constitution*. It was a neutral port, but the British regard for neutrality had been shown at Valparaiso and Fayal, and there was nothing to do but to run for liberty.

Signalling to his prizes to follow, Captain Stewart cut his cable, and so well-trained were the American officers and men that within ten minutes from the time the first ship of the enemy was seen, the *Constitution* and her two prizes were standing out of the harbor together. Though less spectacular than the manœuvres in the battle, the celerity, skill, and unanimity with which the Americans executed this movement show their seamanship quite as plainly.

As the American ships sailed through the fog the guns in the battery on shore began to roar. A number of prisoners who had been on shore on the business of fitting the cartel for sea had taken possession of the Portuguese forts and were firing signal-guns to attract the attention of the British ships. But the British ships were coming from the south—they were beating up against a good northeast breeze, and the Yankee and her prizes hugged the east side of the port and slipped out very well to windward of the enemy.

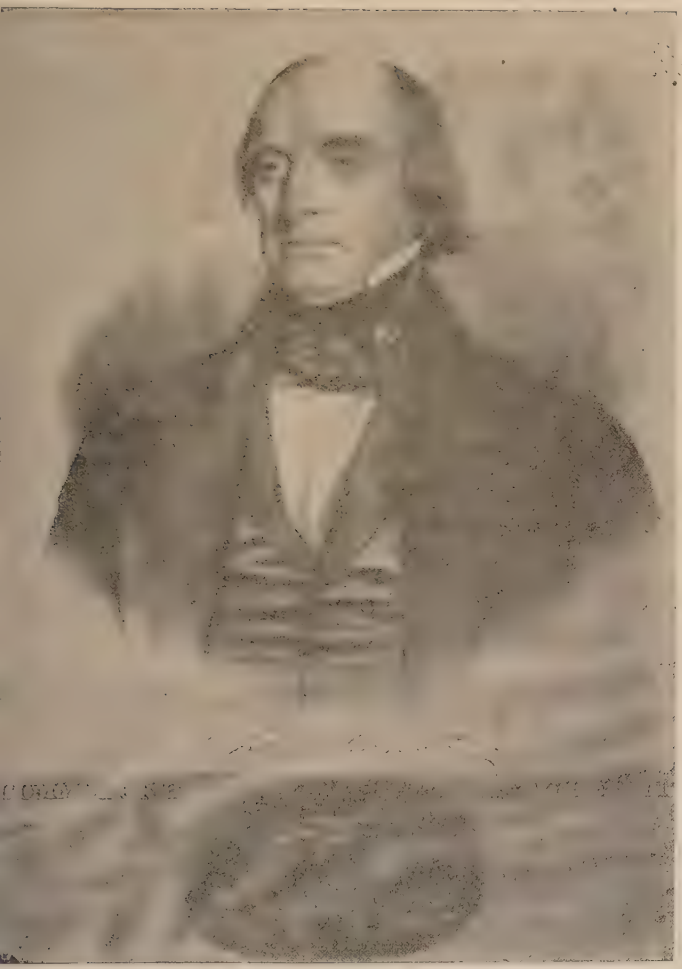
Until clear of the north point of the harbor the Yankees sailed under nothing higher than their top-sails; not even their higher yards were across, and so it happened that they escaped the

eyes of the British lookouts. But when the point was cleared, top-gallant sail and royal-yards were crossed and the sails instantly spread to the breeze, to the astonishment of the look-outs perched above the fog-bank on the British ships. To them it was as if the Yankee sails had grown by magic up into the air and were sailing unsupported on the top of a cloud.

But if magical to the lookouts, it was sober business for the commanders below, who, by a series of "blunders" (James says so), had happened on the retreat of the ship they had failed to hold in Boston, and a race began such as had rarely stirred the souls of those engaged.

Once clear of land the *Constitution* cut adrift two boats that were towing astern. She was only a mile or so to windward of the enemy, and as the point was cleared, all six of the ships were on the port tack lying close up to the wind. The *Constitution's* log says that at 12.50 o'clock she was holding her own with the *Newcastle* and *Leander*, on her lee quarter, while the *Acasta*, about dead astern, was dropping out of the race. And the log of the *Acasta* notes that the *Constitution* was gaining on her while she herself gained on the two prizes.

At 1.10 Captain Stewart ordered the *Cyane* to tack, and Lieutenant Hoffman, in command, obeyed. The *Cyane* was rapidly dropping into the clutches of the enemy before that, but now



Charles Stewart

(and the Battle of the *Constitution* with the *Cyane* and *Levant*).

From a lithograph at the Naval Academy, Annapolis.

she sailed away and escaped altogether, the three British ships holding after the *Constitution* and *Levant.*

Thirty-five minutes after the *Cyane* had tacked away, the *Newcastle,* the leading British ship, opened fire on the *Constitution.* The ships were close enough for the officers, standing on the hammock-nettings, to see each other, but the shots all fell short, so firing ceased and the ships stood along in the close-hauled race until 3 o'clock, when the *Levant* had lagged close enough to the enemy to be in real danger. So Captain Stewart signalled her to tack, as the *Cyane* had done, whereat, to the astonishment of the Yankees, all three of the British frigates tacked after her, and the *Constitution* sailed away free.

The explanation made by the British writers regarding this remarkable episode is that the commanders of both the *Newcastle* and the *Leander* supposed that the little *Levant* was either the "*President, Congress,* or *Macedonian.*" It is difficult for an unbiassed mind to see how this helps them any. Suppose it had been the big Yankee frigate *President* instead of a little low-decked-sloop-of-war? How did it happen that two frigates, each of which was of greater force than the Yankee *President* and another that was of but little less force, were needed to capture "the waggon?"

We cannot know what was in the minds of these British captains, but we do know that the British Admiralty had warned the captains of British frigates to take a reef in their "uncircumspect gallantry," so to speak. They were, as the captain the of *Phœbe* said when after the *Essex*, to capture the Yankee frigates with the least possible danger to themselves. They were to take no risks. Granting that these two British captains really made an honest mistake in supposing a little sloop was a big Yankee frigate—granting it, although James called Rodgers a coward for making, as James says he did, a similar mistake—they abandoned the ship which they fully believed to be a frigate to chase *a manifestly smaller ship*, a ship that we may grant they imagined was the "*Congress* or *Macedonian*."

It is very likely presumptuous for a landsman to tell what lesson is taught by any event at sea, but if the action of these three big British frigates shows anything, it shows the tremendous influence for evil which such orders as that of the British Admiralty are sure to have. Nothing more impressive is to be found in Mahan's learned work on the influence of the sea power than what he says about the demoralization that followed, among the French naval officers, when a very similar order was issued by the French Marine Department. For the head

of a navy department to warn the captains of the naval ships to be prudent—to in any way mention to them any such word as prudence—is to give a shield to those who are by nature cowards, and a blow in the face to those who are by nature brave and ambitious and enterprising. The most serious blunder made by any American in authority during the War of 1812 was made by the Secretary of the Navy when he sent an order to Boston for the *Constitution* to remain in port after her escape from Broke's squadron. Had not Captain Hull, with an enterprise and daring that will never be sufficiently praised, taken her to sea without waiting for further orders, these stories of American victories afloat would never have been written, and the war would have ended—who can say how it would have ended?

It remained for the British Admiralty to make the blunder which our Secretary tried to make—and so the *Constitution* escaped from the British squadron off the Cape de Verde, and the great British squadron chased the little *Levant* back into the neutral port.

There, when the *Levant* had anchored, they surrounded her, and assisted by the escaped prisoners who had captured and manned the Portuguese battery on shore, they fired broadside after broadside at her. They were at a range of their own choosing. They were in the har-

bor where the water was a dead-flat level, and they continued their fire for fifteen minutes without a single shot striking her hull.

At the end of that time the Yankee lieutenant (Ballard) who commanded the little sloop, thinking that they might eventually hit her and hurt somebody, hauled down his flag.

Sir George Collier, who commanded the British squadron in this chase, committed suicide ten years later because his utter failure was thrown into his face at a public gathering.

The *Cyane* reached New York on April 10th, and the *Constitution* returned to Boston in May, to learn that the war was really ended when the battle took place. The Congress awarded a gold medal and a sword to Captain Stewart, and silver medals to the other officers under him for "gallantry, good-conduct, and services in the capture of the British vessels-of-war, the *Cyane* and *Levant*, and a brave and skilful combat."

The fighting days of the *Constitution*—the *Old Ironsides*—the most famous ship of the American Navy—were done. The hastening decay of idleness eventually seized upon her timbers, and it was announced that she was to be broken up. But Oliver Wendell Holmes, of blessed memory, wrote a poem and she was spared. Generations of naval cadets have since learned the art of war and cultivated their nat-

ural love of the flag upon her decks, and now, although a hundred years have passed since the flag was first raised above her quarter-deck, her name still appears upon the naval register, and there it shall remain so long as one of her timbers will support another. And this is the poem that saved her:

Old Ironsides.

Ay, tear her tattered ensign down!
Long has it waved on high,
And many an eye has danced to see
That banner in the sky;
Beneath it rung the battle shout,
And burst the cannon's roar;
The meteor of the ocean air
Shall sweep the clouds no more!

Her deck, once red with heroes' blood,
Where knelt the vanquished foe,
When winds were hurrying o'er the flood
And waves were white below,
No more shall feel the victor's tread,
Or know the conquered knee;
The harpies of the shore shall pluck
The eagle of the sea!

O better that her shattered hulk
Should sink beneath the wave;
Her thunders shook the mighty deep,
And there should be her grave;
Nail to the mast her holy flag,
Set every threadbare sail,
And give her to the god of storms,
The lightning and the gale.

CHAPTER XII

IN THE WASTES OF THE SOUTH ATLANTIC

THE STORY OF A BATTLE—THE *HORNET* AND THE *PENGUIN* IN THE SHADOWS OF TRISTAN D'ACUNHA—AS FAIR A MATCH AS IS KNOWN TO NAVAL ANNALS—IT TOOK THE YANKEES TEN MINUTES TO DISMANTLE THE ENEMY AND FIVE MORE TO RIDDLE HIS HULL—THE BRITISH CAPTAIN'S FORCEFUL DESCRIPTION OF THE YANKEE FIRE—A MARVELLOUS ESCAPE FROM A LINER—THE *PEACOCK* IN THE STRAITS OF SUNDA—WHEN THE LONELY SITUATION OF THIS SLOOP IS CONSIDERED DID WARRINGTON SHOW A LACK OF HUMANITY?—IF HE DID, WHAT DID THE BRITISH CAPTAIN BARTHOLOMEW SHOW?

An echo to the prolonged salute which the ships of Sir George Collier fired, in the harbor of Porto Praya, to the honor of Yankee pluck and seamanship, comes from a giant mountain rising in the lonely wastes of the South Atlantic — from the island of Tristan d'Acunha. On a line from the Cape of Good Hope to Cape Horn, and 1,500 miles west of the Cape of Good Hope, can be found three rugged islands, which, though small in diameter, rise at one point to a height of no less than 8,300 feet above the rollers that crash against their pre-

cipitous walls. No more lonely and no more impressive rocks than these are found in all the world.

But, though far away from civilized habitations, the group was itself inhabited by sealers and whalers even as early as 1791, when a Yankee, one Jonathan Lambert, "by a curious and singular edict declared himself sovereign proprietor" of the group. For it was a breeding resort for seals and seal lions, and it had also a climate and some soil fit for a comfortable human habitation, and this enterprising Yankee had settled there with associates and had "cleared about fifty acres of land, and planted various kinds of seed, some of which, as well as the coffee-tree and sugar-cane, were furnished by the American Minister at Rio Janeiro."

At the time of the War of 1812 it was a very well-known group to Yankee seamen, and seemingly out of the way as it looked when glancing at a chart of that sea, it was nevertheless but a little to one side of what was counted the best route from New York to the East Indies. Accordingly, when Decatur was ordered to take the *President*, the *Hornet*, the new *Peacock*, and the store-ship *Tom Bowline* for a voyage against British commerce in the East Indies, he appointed the Tristan d'Acunha group as the rendezvous where all the ships should meet, replenish their water, stretch the legs of the sea-

men in a chase after wild goats and hogs on shore, and then sail away in search of English men-of-war to conquer.

As has been told, Decatur, when leaving New York, took the natural course along the Long Island coast, instead of the bolder and therefore safer course down the Jersey beach, and "was fairly mobbed" by the British fleet. His consorts, the *Hornet*, the *Peacock*, and the *Tom Bowline*, sailed a few days later (January 22d), without having learned that the *President* was captured, and having escaped the blockaders, they sailed away to the meeting-point.

When a few days out, the *Hornet* separated from her consorts and thereafter proceeded without incident worth mention until, on March 23, 1815, she arrived at the group of Tristan d'Acunha. An action which followed on the day she arrived was the next to the last one of the war. Allen, in beginning his description of the two last, says: "Two actions of a disgraceful character to the Americans remain to be recorded." He then tells that Captain Biddle, commanding the *Hornet*, spoke a neutral ship on March 20th, when the neutral captain said he had heard that peace had been declared. "Information coming in this questionable shape was not binding," says Allen, but "it was Captain Biddle's duty to have acted cautiously before setting it at defiance." He did not act as

cautiously as Allen thinks he should, and so the action was "of a disgraceful character to the Americans." As to the facts, there is no dispute, save in the minor matters of the number of each crew and the size of a couple of guns, so the reader is able to decide for himself how far the action disgraced the American flag.

Having reached the anchorage off the tiny settlement on the main island of the group at about 11 o'clock in the morning of March 23, 1815, the sheets of the head-sails on the *Hornet* were let go preparatory to swinging her up into the wind and dropping her anchor. But no sooner had the sails begun to flap than the look-out announced a sail in sight, and hauling aft the sheets once more the *Hornet* stood out to sea for a look at the stranger.

As it happened, the strange vessel was the British brig sloop *Penguin*, Captain James Dickenson, a new vessel on her first cruise. She had sailed from England to the Cape of Good Hope. When there, news arrived that a heavy Yankee privateer called the *Young Wasp* had been making prizes of British Indiamen, using Tristan d'Acunha as a retreat when water and fresh meat were needed. Accordingly, Admiral Tyler, commanding the squadron, sent the *Penguin* to the lonely group to capture the venturesome privateer, placing on board of her twelve marines from his own ship, the

Medway, to make sure that she had enough men.

So it happened that when the *Penguin* reached the island and saw a sail there, Captain Dickenson thought he had had the good luck to alight on the saucy privateer. Being fearful that the supposed privateer would run away, the *Penguin* was handled very carefully. Captain Dickenson did not want the Yankee to

The *Hornet* and *Penguin*.
From an old wood-cut.

see how many guns the *Penguin* carried and so kept her end on to the *Hornet* as he came down wind to capture her—came down wind because he was fortunate enough to come into the fight with the wind in his favor.

The *Hornet*, as the *Penguin* approached, kept wearing first one way and then the other to keep from getting raked until 1.40 P.M., when the *Penguin* had arrived within musket-

shot. At that the *Penguin* hauled to the wind with the breeze coming in over her starboard bow, when she "hoisted her colors and fired a gun; whereupon the *Hornet* hauled up on the starboard tack and discharged a broadside." The quotation is from Allen. It is a small matter, but the first gun of this "action of a disgraceful character to the Americans" was fired by the British.

The battle that followed was another remarkable exhibit of the superiority of the Yankee gunners. For ten minutes they hurled barshot and other missiles at the rigging of the ill-fated *Penguin*. "In a very short time" these projectiles "had done their work." And then the Yankee gunners began to load with solid shot, loading swiftly as the gunners had done in the *Hornet's* action with the British *Peacock*, but aiming with deliberation. And so, "notwithstanding a heavy swell prevailed," every broadside "was taking effect." The quotations are from Allen. "Taking effect" expressed the result of the Yankee fire but mildly. Captain Dickenson, of the *Penguin*, described the work much more forcibly. He said to First Lieutenant McDonald: "The fellows are giving it to us like hell."

They had thought to encounter one of the sea-militia, but they found a well-trained Yankee man-of-war crew instead.

The *Penguin* having the weather-gage, in spite of her crippled rigging, was steadily drawing down on the Yankee. It was plain that the British gunners were no match for the Yankees, and Captain Dickenson determined to try boarding. Putting up his helm he sent his ship straight at the *Hornet*. Just then a bullet stretched him dead on the deck, but First Lieutenant James McDonald took his place and bravely called on the men to follow him. The British bow came crashing against the *Hornet's* side just abaft the main rigging. The Yankees flocked to the quarter-deck to repel boarders. The blunt cutwater of the British bow sawed up and down on the black waist of the *Hornet*, rasping the thick planks as if to break them in; but the boarders never came over to the bow.

"We tried," said McDonald, afterward, "but found the men rather backward—and so, you know, we concluded to give it up."

The Yankee crew wanted, then, to board the *Penguin* but Captain Biddle stopped them, because it was "evident from the beginning that our fire was greatly superior both in quickness and effect."

Moreover, there was no need for that movement. The *Hornet* forged ahead over the heavy sea, and the bowsprit of the *Penguin* caught her mizzen rigging and carried it away,

The *Hornet* and *Penguin*.
From a wood-cut in the "Naval Monument."

and then the boat davits and spanker-boom as well. The broken boom dropped on a marine who had already had his leg broken by a musket-ball and it broke the leg again, yet the eager fellow wriggled around and strove to point his musket at the British in the foretop of the *Penguin*. The *Penguin's* chief officer shouted that he had surrendered, and Captain Biddle, after ordering his men to cease firing, climbed up on the *Hornet's* rail. At that two of the British marines, who, very likely, had not heard their chief officer surrender, fired at Biddle and at the man at the *Hornet's* wheel. Biddle was severely wounded, and the two marines were instantly killed by a return fire from the Americans.

Then the *Penguin* drifted clear. Her bowsprit fell into the sea, broken short off above the figure-head, and her foremast fell over the lee rail. Her bow came up into the wind, and with such canvas as was spread on her mainmast flat aback, she drifted stern on, a helpless wreck.

The *Hornet* wore around before the wind and came back with a fresh broadside ready, but McDonald hauled down the *Penguin's* flag and once more shouted that she had surrendered. The first of the two "actions of a disgraceful character to the Americans" was ended. It had lasted but twenty minutes from the first gun.

The comparison between the ships, their armament and their crews, is exceedingly pleasing to an American. Rarely have two vessels so nearly equal met in deadly conflict. Under the arbitrary rule of measuring ships the Yankee was three tons larger than the Englishman, but the Englishman had "a slightly greater breadth of beam, stouter sides, and higher bulwarks." That is to say, the British sailors were protected better than the Americans were. The Yankee carried eighteen short thirty-twos and two long twelves, making an actual-weight broadside of two hundred and seventy-nine pounds of metal, The *Penguin*, according to Captain Biddle, carried sixteen short thirty-twos, one short twelve on the forecastle, and two long twelves arranged so that both could be fired on one side, but James says she had long sixes instead of long twelves. It is certain that before this war the British vessels of the class of the *Penguin* did usually carry long sixes for bow-chasers, but the *Penguin* was a new vessel, built after the effectiveness of the larger guns carried by the Yankees had been abundantly demonstrated. The new British frigates carried long twenty-fours instead of long eighteens, as the older frigates had carried, so it is entirely reasonable to believe that Captain Biddle told the truth when he reported on the size of the *Penguin's* guns. Moreover, Biddle was a careful man.

He put a tape-line on the *Penguin's* hull to get at her dimensions, and no one disputes the measurements he made there.

However, the later American writers have not been disposed to insist on this point. They can afford to be generous. They allow the figures of James to go into their tables of comparison, for even with but one long six on the engaged side, the *Penguin* threw two hundred and seventy-four pounds of metal to the Yankee's two hundred and seventy-nine.

Medal Awarded to James Biddle for the Capture of the *Penguin* by the *Hornet*.

But to a student of history at the end of the nineteenth century there never was a sea-duel where the comparison of the weights of metal in the two broadsides was more ridiculous than in this one between the *Hornet* and the *Penguin*. For not one solid shot from the *Penguin* struck the Yankee—not one ; and what is worse still, not one solid shot struck the Yankee's spars. Moreover, the storm of British projectiles was

hurled so high that the injury to the Yankee's rigging was worse above the top-sails than below them. On the other hand, the Yankees, in ten minutes' firing, in spite of the heavy swell, had destroyed the sail-power of the British boat (by Allen's own account), and in five minutes more (not including the time after the ships drifted apart, when no great guns were fired) the Yankees had riddled her hull until she was not worth saving. It is not the weight of metal carried, nor the weight of metal thrown ; *it is the weight of metal driven home into the enemy that wins the battle.*

This, although not the last encounter, was the last real battle of the War of 1812 ; like the first of the war (*Constitution-Guerrière*), and like every other in which the Americans won, and like that between the *Shannon* and the *Chesapeake*, where the British were victorious, it proved, beyond dispute, that the most important art known to a naval ship is the art of aiming guns accurately.

The *Hornet* lost two killed and nine wounded ; the British lost fourteen killed and twenty-eight wounded—nearly one-third of her crew.

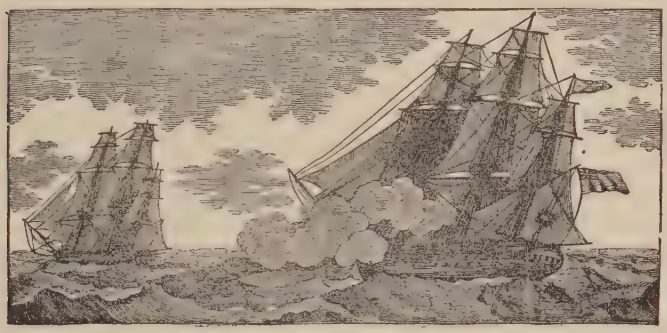
The numbers of the crews cannot be stated beyond dispute. It is admitted that the *Penguin* had twelve marines beyond her full complement—she had more men than she needed

to work her guns. The Yankees admit that they had enough in spite of the fact that eight had been sent away on a prize, and that nine were too sick to leave their beds. By showing the utmost generosity toward British writers, we find that the *Penguin* had one hundred and thirty-two in her crew, including "seventeen boys." The Yankee had at most one hundred and forty-two on board, of whom nine were sick in their hammocks. There were one hundred and thirty-three Yankees at the quarters.

A few days after the battle the Yankee *Peacock* and the store-ship *Tom Bowline* arrived. The store-ship was sent to Rio Janeiro with the prisoners, and then, after waiting until April 13th for the *President* to come, the two sloops sailed away to continue the war in the East Indies. On April 27th a sail was seen and both vessels went in chase, and the next morning the *Peacock* drew rapidly ahead of her older consort. Eventually, when the *Peacock* was about six miles ahead, she suddenly hauled her wind and signalled that the stranger was a line-of-battle ship. This was at 2 P.M. of April 28, 1815.

So both sloops took to their heels. The swift *Peacock* had no trouble in getting out of the way, but the *Hornet* was slow, and the liner chose to follow her. About the time the liner made the choice (she was the seventy-four *Cornwallis*, Admiral Sir George Burleton

K.C.B.) she lost a man overboard, and stopped to pick him up, but she soon made up the time so lost, and at 9 o'clock, seven hours after learning the character of the enemy, the *Hornet's* crew began to lighten ship. At 2 o'clock on the morning of the 29th the enemy was forward of the *Hornet's* lee beam and outfooting the Yankee rapidly, so the Yankee went about. The enemy followed, and at daylight, though



The *Hornet's* Escape from the *Cornwallis*.
From a wood-cut in the "Naval Monument."

still to leeward, was within gunshot, and her bow-chasers gave tongue.

That set the Yankees working for life. The anchors and cables, the spare spars, the ship's launch, and the six cannon and some hundreds of round shot were tumbled into the sea. The *Hornet* drew out of range then, but the wind hauled to the east, favoring the enemy, and once more the crew went at the work of lightening ship. They were sure they would be

captured, but they would not give up. Three of the enemy's shot had come on board, but these had done no injury. All the guns but one were now dumped into the sea, and so was everything else that could be spared. "Many of our men had been impressed and imprisoned for years in their horrible service, and hated them and their nation with the most deadly animosity, while the rest of the crew, horror-struck with the narration of the sufferings of their shipmates who had been in the power of the English, and now equally flushed with rage, joined heartily in execrating the present authors of our misfortune." So wrote one of the *Hornet's* officers. This letter shows not only why the crew made every endeavor to escape; it shows why the fire of the *Hornet* had been more effective than that of the *Penguin*. Their work, however, would have been vain but for another shift of wind. It came in a freshening gale from the west, and the *Hornet* drew ahead. By sunset of the 29th the enemy was four miles astern. By sunrise of the 30th, after a squally night, the liner was twelve miles astern, and at 9.30 she abandoned the chase. The *Hornet* reached home on June 9th. She escaped because her commander was not one of the kind to give up until he had not a plank that would swim.

The *Peacock* continued on the original cruise. Four rich Indiamen, with crews aggregating

two hundred and ninety-one men, were captured, and then on June 30th she fell in with the East India Company's cruiser *Nautilus*, Lieutenant Charles Boyce, a brig of less than half the size of the *Peacock*, and carrying four long nines and ten short eighteens. The *Nautilus* was at anchor off Fort Anjers, in the Straits of Sunda. A boat from the *Nautilus* took her purser on board the *Peacock* to announce, according to Allen, that peace had been declared. Allen says that the purser "was instantly sent below, without being suffered to ask a question." The *Peacock* continued approaching the *Nautilus*, and the British captain "hailed and asked if the captain (of the *Peacock*) knew that peace had been declared."

Captain Warrington fully believed this hail was a ruse to enable the brig to escape to the protection of the fort, and ordered the brig to surrender. Captain Boyce refused, and one or two broadsides (accounts differ) were exchanged, when the brig, having lost seven men killed and eight wounded, and having been badly cut up as well, while the *Peacock* was not even scratched, the British flag was lowered. The gallantry of the British captain was as praiseworthy as the marksmanship of his gunners was execrable.

Allen says that Captain Warrington, in fir-

ing on the British brig, after Boyce's hail, exhibited a "savage barbarity unworthy of a Red Indian."

Roosevelt says: "I regret to say that it is difficult to believe he (Warrington) acted with proper humanity." Cooper says it was an "unfortunate mistake." No writer on this subject seems to have asked himself seriously what he would have done had he been in command of a little sloop in the Straits of Sunda, with all the fleets of the mighty British Empire between him and a home-port—what he would have done had he found a legitimate prize just beyond the guns of a powerful fort of the enemy. Did a legitimate desire for self-preservation in that situation warrant the Yankee in taking every advantage possible of the enemy, and in doubting what the enemy, apparently caught at a disadvantage, might say?

But if Warrington, the Yankee, showed "savage barbarity," what shall be said of the act of Captain Bartholomew, of the British ship *Erebus*, in firing a broadside at the Yankee gun-boat Number 168, commanded by Sailing-master Hurlburt, after learning *officially* that peace had been declared? "Peace having been declared and having been known to exist for over three weeks," the gun-boat, en route to deliver despatches to the British admiral off Tybee Bar, Georgia, did not heave to when ordered to do

so as he was passing the *Erebus*. Instead, he told the British his errand. Captain Bartholomew, cursing like a pirate, said he would sink the gun-boat if a boat from her were not sent on board the *Erebus* instantly, and when Mr. Hurlburt began to reply the British marines opened fire with muskets, and he was ordered to haul down his flag. He refused and the big ship fired a broadside. Hurlburt returned the fire as best he could and then surrendered. He was soon allowed to proceed.

Perhaps it is worth noting that although the gun-boat was within easy musket range, the gunners of the *Erebus* did not hit her with even one shot save in the rigging.

CHAPTER XIII

IN BRITISH PRISONS

A TYPICAL STORY OF THE LIFE OF AN AMERICAN SEAMAN WHO WAS IMPRESSED IN 1810 AND ALLOWED TO BECOME A PRISONER WHEN WAR WAS DECLARED—LUCK IN ESCAPING A FLOGGING—LETTERS TO HIS FATHER DESTROYED—BRITISH REGARD FOR THE MAN'S RIGHTS WHEN THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT TOOK UP THE CASE—A NARRAGANSETT INDIAN IMPRESSED—TO DARTMOOR PRISON—MUSTERED NAKED MEN IN THE SNOWS OF WINTER AND KEPT THEM IN ROOMS WHERE BUCKETS OF WATER FROZE SOLID—MURDER OF PRISONERS SIX WEEKS AFTER IT WAS OFFICIALLY KNOWN THAT THE TREATY OF PEACE HAD BEEN RATIFIED—NOTABLE SELF-RESTRAINT OF THE AMERICANS—SMOOTHED OVER WITH A DISAVOWAL.

SHALL the men who suffered in prison because of their love of the flag be forgotten in a story of the deeds of the American naval heroes? The reader will remember that the British authorities acknowledged that more than 2,000 Americans were serving in British ships through impressment when the war broke out. In some cases when these Americans asked to be treated as prisoners of war their request was granted; not all British commanders were as brutal as those of the *Macedonian* and

the *Peacock*. For a manifestly truthful account of the treatment these men received from the British there is nothing surpassing the autobiography of the Rev. Joseph Bates, printed by the press association of the Seventh Day Adventists. Because his experience was rather easier than the common one; because it included the crowning outrage at the Dartmoor prison when the war was over, and because his story is amply authenticated by other printed accounts, a brief *résumé* of it will be given here to illustrate the life which the unfortunates like him endured.

Bates, at the age of eighteen, was a full-fledged sailor, hailing from New Bedford, Massachusetts, where his father, a soldier of the Revolution, lived. In the spring of 1810, after a voyage that terminated at Belfast, Ireland, Bates went across to Liverpool looking for a berth on a ship bound to America. While there awaiting a chance to ship, the boarding-house was visited by a press-gang that included an officer and twelve men, who gathered in all the likely looking seamen. Bates produced his papers, authenticated by the Collector of Customs in New York, but was cursed for his pains and taken to a house kept for the purpose by the Admiralty, where he went through the form of an examination by a British lieutenant, who at once decided that Bates was an Irish-

man, and the "protection" papers fraudulent. So Bates was sent, on April 27, 1810, on board the ship *Princess*, where he found sixty of his countrymen impressed in like fashion.

A few days later, on the occasion of a funeral which took nearly all the officers ashore, these Americans knocked the bars from the port-hole of the room where they were confined and were forming in line to plunge through it and swim for liberty, when they were detected. For this they were nearly all frightfully flogged, a few escaping (including Bates) because ordered to another ship before their turn came.

Bates was taken to the *Rodney*, where he was exhibited to all the boats' crews by her commander, Captain Bolton, who told the crews that if ever the Yankee was allowed to get into any one of the boats the entire crew should be flogged. Thereafter the *Rodney* was sent to the Mediterranean, where the life of Bates as compared with that of the unfortunates sent to the African and other fever coasts, was bearable. Bates notes that the ship provided two books for each ten men of the crew. One was an abridged life of Nelson, and the other the prayer-book of the Church of England. Bates did not approve of the service of that church, but the boatswain's mates "were required to carry a piece of rope with which to start the sailors"

when ordering them to attend church-service as well as to any work. So he went through the forms when piped to prayers. And when the band played "God Save the King," the mates were particular to see that the Yankee took off his hat.

It happened that the officers of the *Rodney* were not eager to see blood run on a man's back, and Bates, by an active attention to duty, escaped a flogging. His chief cause of complaint was that not one of his letters home was forwarded. After getting transferred to the *Swiftsure* he happened to learn this fact through finding one torn up which he had given to the first lieutenant to mail for him. But by sending one ashore in a market-boat it reached his father, and the father applied to President Madison to get a release. Governor Brooks, of Massachusetts, also took an interest in the matter, and a prominent New Bedford citizen, Captain C. Delano, took the papers to the Mediterranean to secure the release of the young man. Delano was received politely enough by the British Consul (the ship was at Port Mahon at the time). The admiral of the squadron also looked into the matter casually, but the result of all the efforts in behalf of the unfortunate was that the British Consul agreed for a consideration to supply him with money to buy clothing and some comforts beyond the

usual allowance of a common sailor. It is possible, too, that these efforts also influenced the officers somewhat when, some months later (it was in 1812), Bates learned that war had been declared and asked to be transferred to the prison quarter as a prisoner of war. Anyway, not only Bates but twenty-one other Americans were confined as prisoners of war. But they were placed on a short allowance of food, were treated with contumely when below, and at frequent intervals were brought on deck, "where we were harangued and urged to enter the British Navy." Perhaps the one feature of English periodicals printed between the years 1810 and 1815 that is most likely to anger an American, is the indignation the writers affected toward the Yankees for "seducing" British seamen into Yankee ships by the offer of higher wages than the English rate. These exhibitions of British wrath in the face of the fact that British ships held thousands of impressed Americans, is not unlikely to prove stirring to an American, even at the end of the nineteenth century.

Some of the American companions of Bates yielded to the pressure. Bates was not that kind of a man, and after eight months' resistance to starvation, insult, and importunity, he was sent to England. There, with seven hundred others, he was confined near Chat-

ham dock-yard on the *Crown Princess*, a big ship of which the little Danish nation was robbed.

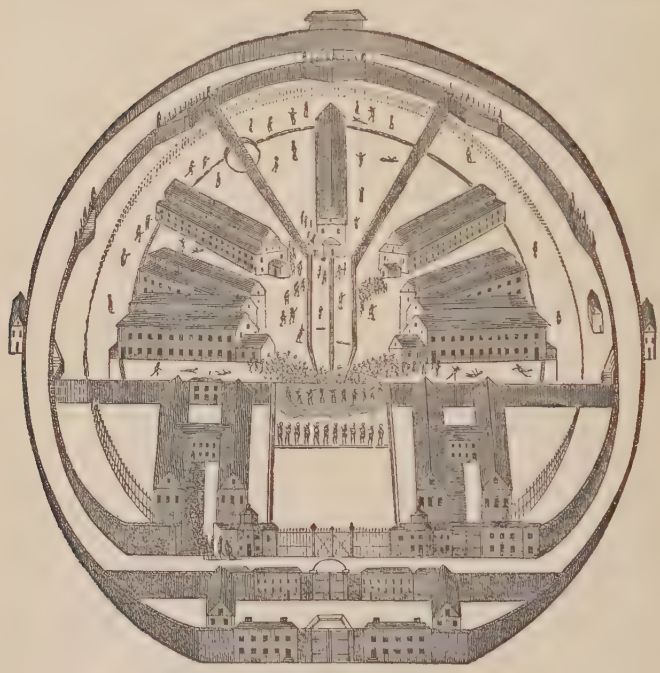
It is but fair to say that the prisoners here were not starved by act of Parliament as they were in Milford prison during the previous war, but their allowance was scanty, and eventually an attempt was made by the officers in charge to cut it still further. At that the whole throng rebelled, refused to take anything, and made such a noise in the hold where they were confined, that the officers, who had their families on board, were obliged to yield.

It is worth telling, too, that short as was the allowance of food, the prisoners stinted themselves on it and sold what they saved in order to buy an occasional newspaper. As these papers had with one or two exceptions only American victories at sea to describe, they filled the old hulk with rapturous joy—a joy that the officials resented, of course, in brutal fashion.

How the prisoners sawed a hole through the ship's side with a case-knife and were detected; how they saw a Narragansett Indian, who was among the impressed-seamen prisoners on another ship, make a dash for liberty only to fail after a heroic effort; how eighteen from the *Crown Princess* did escape at last—all this makes interesting reading. The number of

prisoners increased so rapidly at the last, however, that all were sent to Dartmoor.

"It was in the summer of 1814 that we were sent in large drafts to Dartmoor. Soon we numbered, as we were told, six thousand. The double stone walls, about fourteen feet high,



Dartmoor Prison.

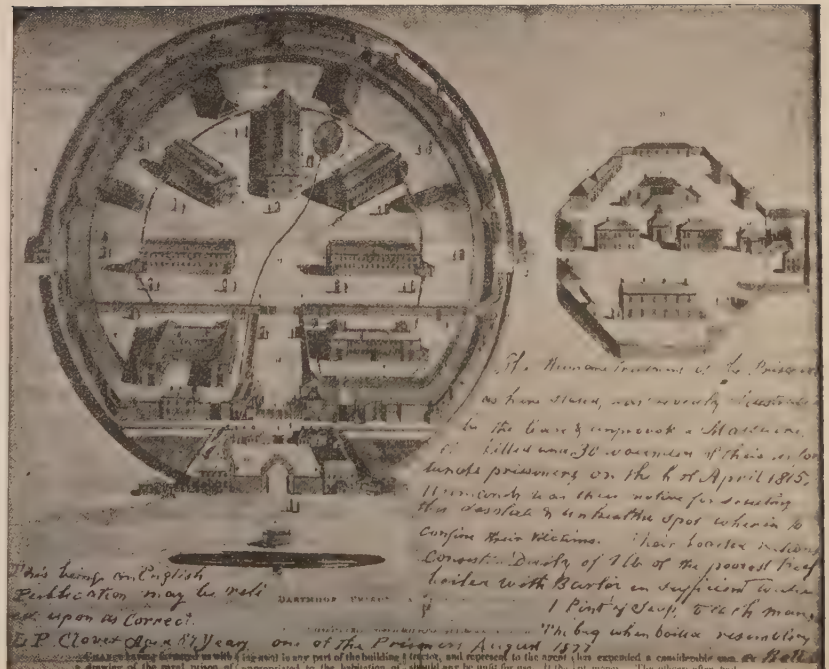
From a wood-cut of a contemporary engraving.

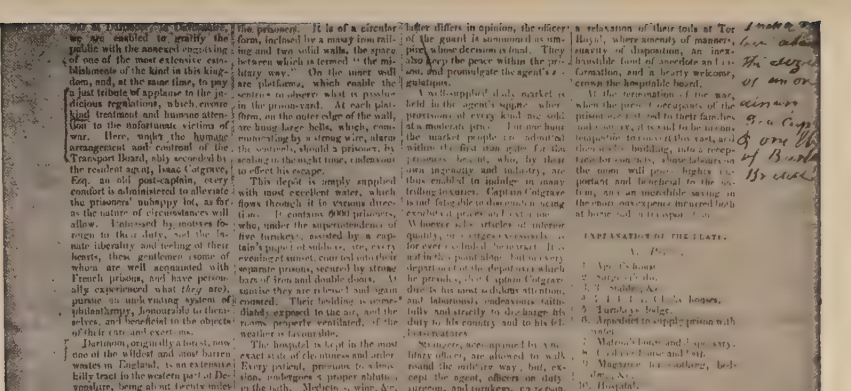
broad enough for hundreds of soldiers to walk on guard, formed a half moon, with three separate yards, containing seven massy stone buildings, capable of holding from 1,500 to 1 800

men each. The centre one was appropriated to colored prisoners.

"These buildings were located on the slope of a hill fronting the east, affording us a prospect of the rising sun ; but it was shut out from our view long before sunset. On three sides one of the most dreary wastes, studded with ledges of rocks and low shrubs, met our view."

Here the prisoners were reduced to the most miserable shifts to cover their persons. "A single bucket only, containing the food, was allowed to a mess, around which they gathered with the avidity of starving men, and each, with his wooden spoon, struggled to eat fastest and most. Filthy, ragged, covered with vermin, they strolled around the yard in the daytime, and, moody and despairing, gradually sank, through degrading companionship and the demoralization of want and suffering, lower and lower in the scale of humanity." For there were European soldiers and sailors as well as Americans in the prison. Many were without hats and shoes and some became absolutely naked. The winters were terribly cold. The water in the stream in the yard and in the prison-rooms froze solid. Snow lay two feet deep on the hill-side. There was no fire in the rooms. Yet these naked men were mustered in the open yards, standing in the snow and storms, every day for an hour, that they might be counted.


This being an English
Publication may be reli
ed upon as Correct.
L. P. Clover Aged 87 Years one of the Prisoners August 1877
DARTMOOR PRISON
Change having formerly as with a big seal to any part of the building & tractor, and represent to the agent has expended a considerable sum as Bolt
a drawing of the royal prison of appropriated to the habitation of should any be unfit for use. If the cut money The officers often find



we are enabled to gratify the public with the annexed engraving of one of the most extensive establishments of the kind in this kingdom, and, at the same time, to pay a just tribute of applause to the judicious regulations, which ensure kind treatment and humane attention to the unfortunate victims of war. Here, under the humane arrangement and control of the Transport Board, ably seconded by the resident agent, Isaac Cosgrave, Esq. an old post-captain, every comfort is administered to alleviate the prisoners' unhappy lot, as far as the nature of circumstances will allow. Unbiassed by motives foreign to their duty, and the dictate liberality and feeling of their hearts, these gentlemen (some of whom are well acquainted with French prisons, and have personally experienced what *they* are), pursue an unalterating system of philanthropy, honourable to themselves, and beneficial to the objects of their care and exertions.

Dartmoor, originally a forest, now one of the wildest and most barren wastes in England, is an extensive hilly tract in the western part of Devonshire, being about twenty miles long, fourteen broad, and containing upwards of 50,000 acres. Nearly in the centre of this desolate district, on a gentle declivity, fifteen miles from Plymouth and seven from Tavistock, is situated the prison for the reception of prisoners of war, recently erected at the expence of £200,000; a structure combining solidity of fabric with security and convenience. Perhaps a more healthy spot might have been selected; but the surrounding advantages which it possesses in other respects, and the great national objects which the projector had in contemplation, seem to have decided the eligibility of the situation. Indeed, it is presumed, when the hand of cultivation shall have reclaimed this vast tract of moor land, under its auspices, all the [illegible] progress between [illegible] the existing [illegible] surrounding cultivation

[illegible] prisoners. It is of a circular form, inclosed by a many iron rails, and two solid walls, the space between which is termed "the military way." On the inner wall are platforms, which enable the sentries to observe what is passing in the prison-yard. At each platform, on the outer edge of the wall, are hung large bells, which, communicating by a strong wire, alarm the sentinels, should a prisoner, by scaling to the night time, endeavour to effect his escape.

This depôt is amply supplied with most excellent water, which flows through it in various directions. It contains 5000 prisoners, who, under the superintendence of five turnkeys, are locked in a certain number of subterranean, etc. every evening at sunset, confined into their separate prisons, secured by strong bars of iron and double doors. At sunrise they are released and again counted. Their bedding is consequently exposed to the air, and the rooms properly ventilated, of the weather is favourable.

The hospital is kept in the most exact state of cleanliness and order. Every patient, previous to admission, undergoes a proper ablution in the bath. Medicine, wine, &c. are furnished unsparingly. Nurses, gamesters, hospital or medicine chest on the British establishment, are liberally supplied with the most comfortable diet; in fact, many of them are withheld from pursuing it, but profusely granted to our enemies.

The prisoners of war are universally clothed and fed at the expence of government. They wear a yellow uniform, occasionally striped with blue. Sufficient guards and centinels, with a strong cordon, prevent a desperate few from making their escape. It appears feasible, supposing them at large, to scale the prison walls. Few are so far fortunate, although bribes have been offered to solitary individuals, but they are invariably retaken. Their rations, of the best quality, are served out warm, and [illegible] the short space of two hours.

[illegible] of the depôt, [illegible] their persons ingenuity and industry, are thus enabled to indulge in many trifling luxuries. Captain Cosgrave is not [illegible] to discountenance exertions of praise and [illegible] encouragement. His honour calls articles of inferior quality, [illegible] to suggest methods for every [illegible] to market. It is not in the power [illegible] but in every department of the depôt on which he presides, [illegible] upon Cosgrave is his [illegible] attention, and laborious endeavours faithfully and strictly to discharge his duty to his country and to his fellow-creatures.

Strangers, accompanied by military officers, are allowed to walk round the military way; but, except the agent, officers on duty, surgeon, and turnkeys, of prison, however high his rank, can procure admittance within the second iron gates, unless provided with a pass or special order from the Transport Board.

The barracks, detached about a quarter of a mile to the southward of the prison, contain between nine and six hundred men. The accommodations for both officers and privates are unequalled. Each regiment in Plymouth garrison takes the duty at this place once a-year for two months. In this cold duty, the depôt is never [illegible] 180 men and five officers constitute mount guard; and, during the night, these five officers and eight sergeants are unceasingly going the rounds, during which they are challenged, give, and receive the countersign and [illegible] six times.

The seat of Thos. Tyrwhitt, Esq. member of parliament for Plymouth. It is within a mile and a half of the [illegible] and [illegible] to [illegible]

a relaxation of their toils at Tor Royal, where serenity of manners, suavity of disposition, an inexhaustible fund of anecdote and information, and a hearty welcome, crown the hospitable board.

At the termination of the war, when the prisoners are restored to their families and country, it is said to be in contemplation to convert this vast, and, in its present state, useless building, into a receptacle for convicts, whose labours on the moor will prove highly important and beneficial to the nation, and at an incredible saving on the enormous expence incurred both at home and in transportation.

EXPLANATION OF THE PLATE.

A. *Plan.*

1. Agent's house
2. Barracks for the [illegible]
3. 3. Stables, &c.
4. 4. 4. 4. 4. 4. Clerks' houses.
5. Turnkeys' lodge.
6. Aqueduct to supply prison with water.
7. Matron's house and laundry.
8. Coal-yard, house and [illegible]
9. Magazine for [illegible] bedding, &c.
10. Hospital.
11. Petty officers' prison
12. South [illegible]
13. South [illegible]
14. 14. 14. 14. 14. Prisons.
15. 15. 15. 15. Sheds for drying clothes.
16. Pond of water supplied by No. 6
17. Reservoir.
18. Detached square for prisoners to receive their allowance from No. 8, also for public [illegible]
19. Agent's square for [illegible] &c.
20. Grand entrance; [illegible] the inscription, "Perseverance subjects, call on the stone arch.

B. Barracks for 800 men.

1. Officers' quarters, [illegible]
2. Hospital.
3. Barrack guard.
4. Magazine.
5. Barrack master's house.
6. [illegible] and store.
7. 7. Men's [illegible]
8. Cook-houses.
9. [illegible]

Dartmoor Prison.

From an old broadside, with notes by one of the prisoners.

Eventually, one Beasely was appointed agent in London for the distribution of a fund supplied by the American Government. Beasely remained in London to enjoy himself and sent a Jew clothier to supply the prisoners with clothing. Bates was able to get money from home, and the British Government paid him his wages earned during the two and a half years he served in the British Navy. This sum is worth mention. For all that time he received £14, 2*s.* 6*d.* So Bates lived better than most of the prisoners, for there was a store for the sale of supplies.

In December, 1814, came the news that the treaty had been agreed upon. In February it was learned that the treaty had been ratified. And yet not only were the Americans not released, the rigor of their treatment was if anything increased. So an attempt to dig out was made, but an informer was among them, and the plot failed. Appeals to Beasely were made, but he neglected them or replied in a manner to exasperate the prisoners. So they burned him in effigy, and the newspapers printed a report of the affair. Beasely let the prisoners know that he was indignant that a lot of common sailors should take such liberties with an official occupying his dignified position.

Meantime, Captain Shortland of the British Navy, who commanded the prison, undertook

compelling the prisoners to eat hard bread instead of fresh, with a reduced allowance of the hard bread. The prisoners refused it and were starved for two days. Then they broke through the gates and remained in a passageway before the store-house, in spite of threats to shoot them, until the officer in command (Captain Shortland was absent) gave them their bread.

This tiny disturbance occurred on April 4, 1815, about six weeks after the frigate bringing the ratified treaty had returned to England. Two days later some of the prisoners were playing with a ball "in No. 7 yard. Several times the ball was knocked over the wall, and was always thrown back by the soldiers when kindly asked so to do. Presently one of the prisoners said in an authoritative manner, 'Soldiers, throw back that ball.' And because it failed to come, some of the ball-players said, 'We will make a hole in the wall and get it.'

"Two or three of them began pecking out the mortar with small stones. A sentinel on the wall ordered them to desist. This they did not do until spoken to again. Aside from this trifling affair the prisoners were as orderly and as obedient as at any time in the past.

"At sunset the turnkeys, as usual, ordered the prisoners to turn in. To effect this and get to their respective prisons, the narrow pass-way was so densely crowded that the folding gateway,

which had not been repaired since the 4th, and was very slightly fastened, burst open, and some few were necessarily and without design crowded into the square.

"It appeared that Governor Shortland with a regiment of armed soldiers had stationed himself above the square, watching for a pretext to come upon us. The bursting open of the folding gates, though unintentional, seemed sufficient for his purpose; for he advanced with his soldiers and ordered them to fire.

"His orders were promptly obeyed, the soldiers rushing in among the fleeing prisoners, and firing among them in all directions. One poor fellow fell wounded, and a number of soldiers surrounded him. He got on his knees and begged them to spare his life, but their answer was:

"'No mercy here.'

"They then discharged the contents of their muskets into him and left him a mangled corpse. Others fleeing for the doors of their respective prisons, that always before had been left open at turning-in time, found them shut, and while endeavoring to gain the opposite door, found themselves subject to the cross-fire of the soldiers. This was further proof that this work was premeditated. After much inquiry we learned that seven men were killed and sixty wounded."

From a copy of a daguerreotype at the Naval Academy, Annapolis.

As it happened, in the rush of prisoners to escape into their rooms, a British soldier was wedged into the mass and carried inside. As soon as he was discovered a Yankee boatswain piped for order. The doors had now been locked and the prisoners had the soldier completely in their power. With their wounded shipmates before their eyes—some of them dying—a cry for vengeance arose.

"Hang him! hang him! hang him!" rang through the building. It was now the soldier's turn to beg for the mercy that had been refused to the wounded one who had knelt and begged in the passageway. It is with the heartiest satisfaction that Americans read in this day that when a vote was taken among the prisoners as to what should be done with the soldier, the result was "decidedly in favor of releasing him." He had merely obeyed the order of Captain Shortland.

There was an investigation, of course. Sixty-seven men, held prisoners because they had refused to fight against their flag, had been shot down in a prison where they were under the most rigorous rules, although the ratified treaty of peace had been deposited in London more than six weeks before. They had been shot down through the spleen of a British post captain. Mr. Charles King represented the American Government. "Mr. King had rather, at

any time, smooth over a quarrel, than increase the exasperation by dealing sternly with its causes," says an old-time apologist for his act. He conceived it to be his duty to smooth over the wanton murder of which Captain Shortland was guilty. When "the massacre at Dartmoor was *disavowed* by the British Government," he was satisfied.

CHAPTER XIV

STORIES OF THE DUELLISTS

TRADITIONS OF PERSONAL COMBATS THAT ILLUSTRATE, IN A WAY, A PART OF THE LIFE LED BY THE OLD TIME NAVAL OFFICERS—WHEN AN ENGLISHMAN DID NOT GET "A YANKEE FOR BREAKFAST"—THEY WERE OFFENDED BY THE NAMES OF THE YANKEE SHIPS—SOMERS WAS ABLE TO PROVE THAT HE WAS NOT DEVOID OF COURAGE—THE FATE OF DECATUR, THE MOST FAMOUS OF THE NAVY'S DUELLISTS.

As the student of American naval history turns the leaves of Cooper's invaluable work, nothing found there is likely to impress him more deeply than the list of names of the officers retained on the naval register after the Peace Establishment Act of 1801. For he will find there at a glance the names of the majority of the heroes of the early days—the names of such men as Dale and Bainbridge and Stewart and Hull and Somers and Decatur and Perry and Macdonough, to bring to mind the notable deeds done when the nation was young. These alone make the tabular pages notable. But when they are examined more closely, still another impressive feature is found, for in the col-

umn of the table that tells the ultimate fate of the majority of the men there named, he will find the words "killed in a duel" so frequently as to produce a distinct mental shock. There were thirty-six lieutenants, of whom two, Stephen Decatur and Henry Vandyke, were "killed in a duel." There were one hundred and fifty-nine midshipmen, of whom three suffered a similar fate.

It is a pity that no adequate record was kept of the duels of American naval officers in other days, for, shocking as the assertion may seem to the humanitarian, in these days, it is nevertheless a fact that some of the duellists of those days proved their heroic and manly qualities in personal combats—in combats that did not always result in death, as well as in some that did. A few of these duels are mentioned in some detail in a variety of historical works. There are others that live by tradition only, while of others still there is nothing now known, so far as the writer hereof could learn, although inquiry was made of many naval officers and all the books relating to such subjects were searched. But because some of the duels of which an account is to be had were creditable under the circumstances to at least one of the men taking part in each, and because others illustrate the spirit of the age, even an inadequate account of them seems to be better than none at all.

In proof of the assertion that duels were sometimes creditable, the story of the meeting of Midshipman Joseph Bainbridge with the secretary of Sir Alexander Ball, Governor of the Island of Malta, in 1803, shall be told first of all. There are several versions of the story, but all agree as to the most important facts, and of these there is no doubt.

As the reader will remember, the Americans had a fleet in the Mediterranean, at that time, negotiating treaties with the Barbary pirates. It was in the days when the lucky schooner *Enterprise* thrashed the pirate polacre *Tripoli*, losing not a man herself, but killing twenty of the enemy and wounding thirty more; when Stephen Decatur avenged the treacherous killing of his brother James in a hand-to-hand fight with the pirate murderer, and afterward burned the *Philadelphia;* when Somers went to his death in the fire-ship *Intrepid.*

At the various civilized ports where the American ships called, the American officers fell in with the officers of the European navies. The Yankees had already shown somewhat of their skill as sea-warriors, but in the minds of the European officer they were at best mere plebeians. They were of the people. In short, in the mind of the European officer, they were not gentlemen. The English officers were the chief aggressors in treating the Americans with

contumely. Considering the state of civilization at that day, what was an American officer to do?

On a certain night in the month of February, 1803, while the *Chesapeake*, the *New York*, the *John Adams*, and the *Enterprise* were lying at Malta, a number of the officers went ashore to spend the evening. Eventually they gathered at the theatre. While a number of them stood in the lobby there, the secretary of the Governor came in with some friends. He was of mature years and a noted duellist of that day—had killed a number of men, in fact—and his mission in the theatre was to get a fight with one of the Yankee officers. He had openly boasted, it is said, that he would "have a Yankee for breakfast" the next day.

Looking over the group, he selected one of the youngest, Midshipman Joseph Bainbridge, for his victim, and on walking past the group jostled him. As it happened, Bainbridge was at that moment speaking to a shipmate and was taken wholly by surprise. Having no idea that anyone would wilfully seek a deadly quarrel, his first impression was that the jostling was accidental. Nevertheless, when the secretary walked away with a jaunty air, Bainbridge suspected that an insult had been intended, and he was just speaking to his shipmates about it when Lieutenant Stephen Decatur happened

along. Decatur had had experience in such matters, and Bainbridge at once stated the case to him.

"We'll very soon learn whether it was an accident or an insult," said Decatur, and he was turning away to go in search of the offender when the fellow came past the group from behind Decatur. As he arrived beside young Bainbridge, the duellist said, in a voice that all could hear :

"Those Yankees will never stand the smell of gunpowder." Then he jostled the youngster again and started on, but before he could take a second step he received a blow from the Yankee's fist that knocked him sprawling.

Of course the duellist challenged as soon as he could get on his feet. Decatur smiled and bowed. Turning to Bainbridge, who was, it should be remembered, a boy of perhaps sixteen, Decatur said :

"Go aboard ship, sir, and give yourself no more concern about this matter. I will attend to everything."

As soon as Bainbridge left the theatre Decatur went aside with the Englishmen to arrange for the inevitable duel. As the challenged party, the Americans had the right to make the terms. Said Decatur when the others were ready to hear him :

"We will go to the beach at sunrise to-mor-

row morning. There we will place our men back to back, and at the word 'March' they shall each march two steps and then whirl and fire. There shall be only the one word."

"My God, man," said the English second, "that is clear murder."

"Pardon me," said Decatur, "your man is an experienced duellist. He has picked out for his victim one of our young officers who has had no experience whatever. By the terms that I propose they will be placed as nearly on an equal footing as is possible. However, sir, if you do not wish to fight in that way, I will take the place of the midshipman and meet your man on the usual terms at ten paces."

And the Englishman chose to fight the boy on the terms named rather than face the experienced Decatur.

So Decatur went on board ship, and taking Midshipman Bainbridge on deck, placed him with a cocked but empty pistol in hand, back to back with a shipmate, and said "March." Bainbridge marched two steps, whirled on his heel in military fashion, and snapped the empty pistol at his shipmate. Again he was placed in position, and again he marched and turned and snapped the pistol. And from that time on he stood erect and marched and turned, again and again, the whole night

through—he was drilled in his duty till he did it as mechanically as, and with the accuracy of, a clock that strikes the hour.

And as the sun was tingeing the morning sky he was placed back to back with the professional duellist. Both marched at the word and both turned, but because Bainbridge had been trained by Stephen Decatur he turned more swiftly than the enemy, and shot him dead.

Let the reader decide for himself whether that was or was not a fight for the honor of the flag. Meantime, it is worth telling that the Governor of Malta, Sir Alexander Ball, was so wrought up over the death of his secretary, and made such a stir about it, that Decatur returned to America as a passenger in the *New York* to avoid international complications.

In 1801 the frigate *Essex*, Captain William Bainbridge, was lying at Barcelona. One night as the captain was going off to the *Essex*, the commander of a Spanish guard-boat, in the harbor, hailed him and with vulgar and abusive language ordered him to bring the gig alongside the guard-boat. Captain Bainbridge paid no attention to the words, and the Spaniards fired several musket-shots at him.

Then Bainbridge pulled alongside the guard-boat, supposing some mistake had been made. To his surprise the Spaniard insolently ordered him to come on board. At that Bainbridge

rowed away, in spite of the Spaniard's threats to fire, and, being long-suffering, paid no further attention to the matter.

The next night, however, Decatur, who was executive officer of the *Essex*, was on shore with some of the other lieutenants, and when they were going off they were insulted in much the same fashion.

That was too much for Decatur. Going over to the guard-boat next morning, he asked for its captain. Unfortunately, that official was on shore. Learning this, Decatur said:

"Tell him that Lieutenant Decatur, of the frigate *Essex*, pronounces him a cowardly scoundrel, and that when they meet on shore he will cut his ears off."

Then he went back to the *Essex*. The guard-boat officers made haste ashore and informed the Commandante of the Port as well as their captain, who, it appears, was a man of influence. Straightway the Commandante wrote to Bainbridge asking that the lieutenants of the *Essex* be kept on board ship in order to prevent a personal altercation between Decatur and the guard-boat captain. Of course Bainbridge refused the insolent request, sending word that if the Spanish captain did not know how to treat American officers as gentlemen, he must take the consequences.

Finding himself unable to wriggle clear of

the trouble, the Spaniard, rather than fight, made a humble apology. He was censured by his superior also, and the King, on hearing the story, issued a special edict ordering all officials to "treat all officers of the United States with courtesy, and more particularly those attached to the United States frigate *Essex*."

When the War of 1812 was ended and the new American ships, that, like the *Guerrière*, were named for victories over the British, arrived at Gibraltar, en route to thrash the African pirates once more, the feelings of the British officers on the station were so wrought up by the presence of the Yankees that a number of duels were fought. A brief tradition of one of them shall serve to illustrate the spirit of them all.

An American lieutenant, on going ashore, was publicly insulted by six British officers, who were all challenged by the American, and it was arranged that he should meet one each day at sunrise, should he survive long enough, until he had had satisfaction from them all. For four mornings the American lieutenant rode away to the duelling ground, and each day rode back again leaving the Englishmen to bring in the dead body of their man. But on the next morning, as he rode out with the fifth, there being no one in the party but the principals, their seconds, and the surgeons, a mob of

British partisans, well-armed and disguised as highwaymen, came galloping toward them. As it happened, the Englishman was riding a thoroughbred animal and the American lieutenant a worthless scrub.

Seeing the mob coming the Englishman's face paled with anger.

"They are coming to kill you," he said to the American lieutenant. "You take my horse and you can escape them, and we will settle this affair at another time."

Convinced by both the English principal and his second that the mob was really bent on murder, the American accepted the horse, and by hard riding did escape. But after that he did not have the heart to kill the one who had shown himself so much of a man. The Englishman was willing to apologize, and so was the remaining one who had been challenged, and the American, with hearty good-will, accepted their explanations.

There were personal combats of another kind growing out of the European dislike for the American Republic. Decatur was once on shore at night with Midshipman Macdonough, in Naples, when a gang of three armed ruffians attacked them. Decatur promptly cut down two of them with his sword, when the third, who had attacked Macdonough especially, fled. Macdonough pursued him. Running into an

open door, the fellow fled to the roof of the house with Macdonough close on his heels. On reaching the roof and finding the Yankee still after him, he jumped from it, and was instantly killed by the fall.

Of a very different nature from a moralist's point of view at the present time were the duels the American naval officers fought among themselves. The story of the first—probably the only one—fought by the lamented Somers, who lost his life before Tripoli, will serve better than any other to show the spirit of the naval officers of the day.

As related in the "United States Naval Chronicle," Somers and Decatur, who were intimate friends, were one day chaffing one another in the presence of some other young officers, and in the course of the remarks Decatur called Somers a fool. Somers, of course, paid no attention to the epithet, for it was said in mere play. But the other youngsters, five in number, took the matter seriously, and the next day refused to accept Somers's invitation to join him in a bottle of wine.

Somers, very greatly astonished, asked why, and they explained frankly that they thought he had failed to show a spirit proper for a naval officer when he was called a fool.

Immediately Somers went to Decatur and related the facts. Decatur said at once that

he would give a dinner at which he would explain the whole matter, and place Somers right before his fellow-officers, but Somers said:

"They have allowed themselves to suspect my courage. I must convince them that they are mistaken; and my only course is to fight them all."

Decatur acted as second for Somers, delivered the five challenges, and it was arranged that Somers should meet them in succession during one hour. So they gathered at a convenient place and Somers faced his first man. At the word both fired, and Somers missed, but got his own right arm pierced with the bullet of his antagonist.

At this Decatur wanted to take his place, but Somers refused and stood up and fired at the second man, using his wounded arm. Again he missed and again was himself struck, this time in the hip, the wound bleeding so profusely that Somers was soon too weak to stand. Nevertheless he insisted on having the third man come on.

When the third man took his stand Somers was unable either to stand erect or to hold out a pistol steadily. So Decatur sat down on Somers's left side, put his right arm around Somers's body until he could help support the weight of Somers's right arm, and in this po-

sition the word was given. At this shot Somers managed to wound his antagonist.

The whole five were by this time so much impressed by the pluck and persistence of the young fellow that they made ample apology for having misjudged him.

It is because of the spirit which Somers showed on this occasion that several writers of American history have expressed the belief that, on finding the ketch *Intrepid* caught by the Tripolitans when he was taking her into the harbor, he did deliberately fire her magazine. He was of the nature that would rather die than fail. What a pity it was that he did not live to command a ship in the next war!

Commodore Perry once stood up to face an antagonist, a Captain Heath, whom he had offended — but Perry and his second, Stephen Decatur, were agreed that Heath had had just cause of offence, and Perry refused to fire. The trouble was compromised after Heath had fired once.

Last of all was the duel that ended Decatur's life—unquestionably the most famous duel known to the annals of the navy, and one that created almost as much stir in the nation as that between Hamilton and Burr. Moreover, it is one that should not fade from memory, for the one reason, if for no other, that it came as a

direct result of the attack of the British frigate *Leopard* upon the American frigate *Chesapeake*, in time of peace, for the purpose of taking three impressed American seamen that had escaped from their slavery in the British navy.

Commodore James Barron, as the reader will remember, was suspended from the navy because he had gone to sea with his ship unprepared for action, although the British officers at Norfolk had been very free in making threats. In the course of years it became Decatur's duty, as one of the Naval Commissioners, to decide on the advisability of restoring Barron to active service. Barron had continually protested that his punishment was "cruel and unmerited," and had made many attempts to get into active service, but Decatur was unable to approve of all that Barron had done. Decatur distinctly "disclaimed all personal enmity toward him," but said frankly that "he entertained and did still entertain the opinion that his conduct, *since that affair*, had been such as ought forever to bar his readmission into the service." Barron had remained out of the United States during all the War of 1812, although the term for which he was suspended was but five years. It was this, added to Barron's failure to have the *Chesapeake* ready for a fight, that influenced Decatur.

The correspondence between Barron and Decatur on the subject of Barron's readmission began in June, 1819, and ended in February, 1820. Barron's last letter to Decatur was dated at Norfolk, January 16, 1820. It said:

SIR: Your letter of the 20th ultimo I have received. In it you say that you have now to inform me that you shall pay no further attention to any communications that I may make to you other than a direct call to the field; in answer to which I have only to reply that whenever you will consent to meet me on fair and equal grounds, that is, such as two honorable men may consider just and proper, you are at liberty to view this as that call. The whole tenor of your conduct to me justifies this course of proceeding on my part. As for your charges and remarks, I regard them not—particularly your sympathy. You know not such a feeling. I cannot be suspected of making the attempt to excite it.

I am, sir, yours, etc., JAMES BARRON.

To this Decatur replied on January 24th as follows:

SIR: I have received your communication of the 16th, and am at a loss to know what your intention is. If you intend it as a challenge, I accept it, and refer you to my friend, Commodore Bainbridge, who is fully authorized to make any arrangement he pleases as regards weapons, mode or distance.

Your obedient servant, STEPHEN DECATUR.

On March 22, 1820, they met at Bladensburg, near Washington. Decatur was accompanied by Commodore Bainbridge and Barron by Captain Elliott, who, perhaps because his own conduct in the face of the enemy had been assailed, was a strong partisan of Barron.

Henry Austin, in an interesting account of this duel, says that Bladensburg was chosen as the site of the duel by Decatur because it was "near the city of Washington," where Decatur was then living, and the "inconvenience of a man lying wounded at a distance from his own home." Pistols were the weapons chosen. The following letter describing the event is by one who saw the duel:

WASHINGTON, Wednesday, March 22, 1820.

This morning, agreeably to his request, I attended Commodore Bainbridge in a carriage to the Capitol Hill, where I ordered breakfast at Beale's Hotel for three persons. At the moment it was ready, Commodore Decatur, having walked from his own house, arrived and partook of it with us. As soon as it was over he proceeded in our carriage toward Bladensburg. At breakfast he mentioned that he had a paper with him which he wished to sign (meaning his will) but that it required three witnesses, and as it would not do to call in any person for that purpose, he would defer it until we arrived on the ground. He was quite cheerful and did not appear to have any desire to take the life of his antagonist; indeed, he declared that he should be very sorry to do so. On arriving at a valley, half a mile short of Bladensburg, we halted, and found Captain Elliott standing in the road on the brow of the hill beyond us. Commodore Bainbridge and myself walked up and gave him the necessary information, when he returned to the village. In a short time Commodore Barron, Captain Elliott, his second, and Mr. Latimer arrived on the ground, which was measured (eight long strides) and marked by Commodore Bainbridge nearly north and south, and the seconds proceeded to load. Commodore Bainbridge won the choice of stands, and his friend chose that to the north, being a few inches lower than the other.

On taking their stands, Commodore Bainbridge told them to observe that he should give the words quick, "Present; one, two, three;" and that they were not, at their peril, to fire before

the word "one" nor after the word "three" was pronounced. Commodore Barron asked him if he had any objections to pronouncing the words as he intended to give them. He said that he had not, and did so.

Commodore Barron, about this moment, observed to his antagonist that he hoped, on meeting in another world, they would be better friends than they had been in this; to which Commodore Decatur merely replied, "I have never been your enemy, sir." Nothing further passed between them previous to firing. Soon after Commodore Bainbridge cautioned them to be ready, crossed over to the left of his friend, and gave the words of command precisely as before; and at the word "two" they both fired so nearly together that but one report was heard.

They both fell nearly at the same instant. Commodore Decatur was raised and supported a short distance and sank down near to where Commodore Barron lay; and both of them appeared to think themselves mortally wounded. Commodore Barron declared that everything had been conducted in the most honorable manner and told Commodore Decatur that he forgave him from the bottom of his heart. Soon after this, a number of gentlemen coming up, I went after our carriage and assisted in getting him into it; when leaving him under the care of several of his intimate friends, Commodore Bainbridge and myself left the grounds, and, as before agreed upon, embarked on board the tender of the *Columbus* at the Navy Yard.

It is due to Commodore Bainbridge to observe, that he expressed his determination to lessen the danger to each, by giving the words quick, with a hope that both might miss and that then their quarrel might be amicably settled.—SAMUEL HAMBLETON.

Austin says that "after being shot, Decatur stood for a moment erect, but was observed by Dr. Treditt, as subsequently communicated to Dr. Washington, the other doctor, to press his hand to his right side. He then fell, the ball having passed through his abdomen. He remarked, 'I am mortally wounded. At least, I

believe so, and wish that I had fallen in defence of my country.'"

The ball from Barron's pistol entered Decatur's body two inches above the right hip and, passing through the abdomen, lodged against the opposite side. It was necessarily a mortal wound in those days, and there would be but faint hope of a man surviving it in these days of skilful surgery.

Decatur's shot struck the upper part of Barron's right hip and turned to the rear—a severe but not a mortal wound. There is no doubt that Decatur deliberately inflicted a wound that would not prove mortal. Decatur had a fight with the mate of a merchant ship in 1799, in which he wounded the mate precisely as he wounded Barron. He was a dead shot when he chose to be.

Decatur died in the arms of his wife at the mansion on an estate known as Kalorama, a mile from Georgetown, on the night of the duel. He was but forty years old. His body was deposited in a vault at Kalorama on the 24th in the presence of a tremendous concourse of people, including nearly all the officials, American and foreign, of the capital. His pall-bearers were Commodores Tingey, Macdonough, Rodgers, and Porter, Captains Cassin, Ballard, and Chauncey, Generals Brown and Jesup, and Lieutenant McPherson. His body

was removed to Philadelphia in 1844, where it was deposited in St. Peter's churchyard. "An Ionic marble pillar on which an American eagle stands triumphant," marks the grave.

Barron's wound confined him to his boarding-house in Washington (Norfolk was his home) for three weeks. He was restored to active service in 1825; and in 1839 had become the senior officer of the navy. He was then placed on waiting orders, when he retired to Norfolk, where he died on April 21, 1851, aged eighty-two years. His name had been on the naval register fifty-three years. Having missed the opportunity to make a great name for himself by sinking the *Leopard*, as he ought to have done, he never had another one. He was something of an inventor, but his career in the navy is worth mentioning only as showing a youthful officer what not to be.

CHAPTER XV

AMONG THE WEST INDIA PIRATES

A BREED OF COWARDLY CUTTHROATS LEGITIMATELY DESCENDED FROM THE LICENSED PRIVATEERS AND NOURISHED UNDER THE PECULIAR CONDITIONS OF CLIMATE, GEOGRAPHY, AND GOVERNMENTAL ANARCHY PREVAILING AROUND AND IN THE CARIBBEAN SEA—COMMODORE PERRY LOSES HIS LIFE BECAUSE OF THEM—WILLIAM HOWARD ALLEN KILLED—PIRATE CAVES WITH THE BONES OF DEAD IN THEM—PORTO RICO TREACHERY—THE UNFORTUNATE FOXARDO AFFAIR—MAKING THE COASTS OF SUMATRA AND AFRICA SAFE FOR AMERICAN TRADERS.

A DIRECT and necessary result of the licensing of privateers, which prevailed throughout the wars between France and England, and England and the United States up to the year 1815, was the development of a horde of pirates in the West Indies. The lust of prize-money worked on the minds of the baser sort of sailors who had been members of the crews of privateers until the distinction between flags was nothing—even the distinction between a lawful flag and a black one was of no moment. From shedding the blood of non-combatants under license in time of war it was but

a short step to the murder of seamen and passengers on common cargo-carriers in time of peace.

Moreover, the condition of governmental affairs in the West Indies and along the Spanish main was near that of anarchy. The Spanish American colonies were in a state of revolt against the crown, and yet they cannot be said to have had a stable government anywhere. There was, indeed, a form of government on the north coast of South America and another at Buenos Ayres—mere military dictatorships at best—but these, instead of serving the ends of peace and order, really promoted robbery on the high seas; for they issued licenses to swift-sailing vessels that went forth ostensibly to prey lawfully on the commerce of Spain, but, when once at sea, did not hesitate to take any well-laden merchantman they found, appropriate so much of the cargo as was of value, and then sink her and her crew and passengers together.

Naturally other ships were fitted out, to prey on commerce, that had not even the flag of a country like the South American republics. It was not difficult to find capitalists to support such enterprises and merchants who were literally "fences" for sea robbers. There were spirits who did not need any capital beyond a sword, men who would get a ship by taking it

with a crew of their own kind. Nevertheless, the curse of the criminal was upon them this far, that they never dared venture so far from their hiding-places as to attack the packet trade that crossed the Banks of Newfoundland *en route* between Europe and the northern ports of the United States. And this seems a little curious, too, for rich prizes might have been had there.

The geographical conditions of the waters favored them, for the Caribbean Sea was a sea of a thousand islands and ten thousand inlets and bays, where the piratical craft might hide ship and plunder, and fit out for further depredations. And it was a climate to delight the lazy, while fruits and wild animals for food abounded, and the morals of the inhabitants that were nominally law-biding were of a grade to suit the pirates.

After the peace was made between the United States and England the Yankee merchants hastened to retrieve the losses they had endured during the prolonged trouble, by engaging once more in the West India trade. It was a lucrative trade. A ship that hit the market just right might clear the cost of her in a single voyage. But as time went by, the number that sailed from port and never returned, although no hurricane had been encountered, and the number that came in with tales of races for life with vessels that swarmed

with eager cutthroats, increased until, in the year 1819, the Government of the United States undertook the task of clearing the sea of the vicious horde.

It was not as easy a task as it would seem to one who in this day reads of the matter. For the leaders of the states in South America were striving under the most adverse circumstances to set up republican forms of government. They were patriots in principle. The Monroe doctrine had not yet taken form, but the people of the Anglo-Saxon republic looked upon the efforts of the Latin-Americans with a kindly eye, holding fast to the doctrine that "the cure for the evils of liberty is more liberty." It was necessary to destroy the pirates and yet at the same time aid rather than injure the young nations of the continent.

Accordingly Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry, the hero of Lake Erie (he was commodore by courtesy only, captain being the highest rank in the navy), was detailed to the work. He had the *John Adams* for a flagship, and the *Constellation*, Captain Alexander Scammel Wadsworth, and the *Nonsuch*, Captain Alexander Claxton, for his squadron.

That was an unfortunate assignment for Perry. He reached the mouth of the Orinoco on July 15, 1819, shifted his flag to the *Nonsuch*, that alone could cross the bar, and started

United States Sloop-of-War *Albany* Under Sail.
From the "Kedge Anchor."

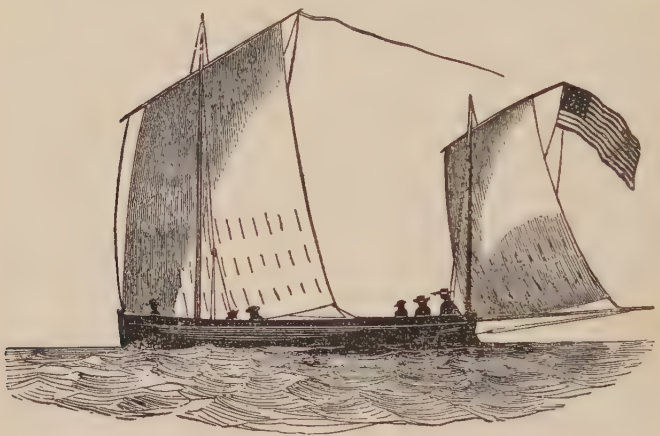
up the river to Angostura, then the capital of the country. It was a river trip of three hundred miles. His journal tells a pitiful story of that journey—a story of suffering from the dead, hot air; of the feverish thirst, of the fierce onslaught of myriads of winged insects; of sitting in smudges to escape the insects; of trying to sleep in the suffocating berths, "until almost mad with the heat and pain."

On July 26th Angostura was reached. Perry wanted a list of the vessels licensed by the republic and compensation for an American vessel that had been unlawfully condemned. President Bolivar was away, but the Vice-president, Don Antonio Francisco Zea, promised to do all in his power to make the matters right—"*mañana*," to-morrow. Perry went to live on shore. The yellow fever prevailed. Two foreigners in the house with Perry died of it. The crew of the *Nonsuch* became infected. The natives did all they could to annoy the Americans, but on August 11th a satisfactory official reply was received from the government. With it came an invitation to a state banquet to be given in honor of the Americans on the 14th. Perry felt obliged to accept.

On the 15th he sailed for the sea and arrived at the bar on the night of the 17th, but the fever had clutched him. He awoke at 4 o'clock on the morning of the 18th in a chill; the fever

rapidly developed, and just as the ship was entering the Port of Spain, Trinidad Island, he died.

As it happened, a number of British officers were stationed here, who had fought against Perry on Lake Erie. They had learned that he was to visit the port and had made every preparation to give him a hearty British wel-



A Ship-of-War's Cutter.
From the "Kedge Anchor."

come, and when they learned that he was dead, they showed him every honor at his funeral. His body was afterward taken to Newport, Rhode Island.

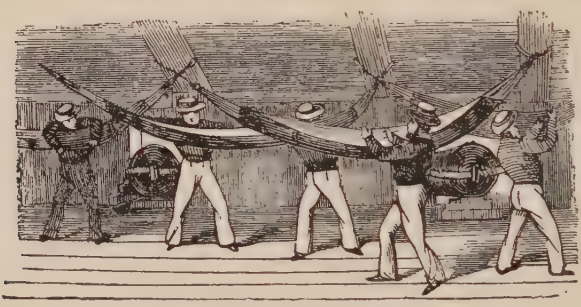
Until 1821 nothing more of consequence appears to have been done to suppress the pirates. In this year the famous sloop-of-war *Hornet*, Captain Robert Henley; the famous

brig *Enterprise*, Captain Lawrence Kearny ; the brig *Spark* and the schooners *Porpoise* and *Grampus*, with three gun-boats, were sent down. It was as if eight policeman had been assigned to enforce the laws and preserve order in the whole of the Greater New York. However, the force went to work in earnest, and soon proved that the pirates were cowards in the face of naval authorities. On October 16, 1821, four pirate schooners and a sloop were found plundering three American merchantmen near Cape Antonio. Captain Kearny of the *Enterprise* sent five row-boats with his men after the pirates, who fired two of their schooners and tried to escape in the other three vessels. The three vessels were taken, however, with forty of the pirates, who were sent to Charleston. A month later a pirate resort on shore was destroyed near the same point, and in December another schooner was captured, although its crew escaped ashore. On March 6, 1822, the *Enterprise* captured four pirate barges and three launches with one hundred and sixty men. The *Enterprise* was still a lucky ship. Meantime the *Hornet* and the *Porpoise* had done almost as well.

In 1822 Commodore James Biddle came down in the *Macedonian* with a large addition to the fleet. The *Shark*, under Captain Matthew Calbraith Perry, captured five pirate ves-

sels and helped in the capture of the *Bandara de Sangare*, a piratical vessel very well known in that day, while the *Grampus* took the *Pandrita*, a vessel of superior force to herself, and as well known as the *Sangare*.

On October 16th the *Grampus* captured a brigantine that was flying Spanish colors, which proved to be the Porto Rico privateer *Palmira*. But the *Palmira* had recently plundered the American schooner *Coquette*. She was one of



Lashing up Hammocks.
From the "Kedge Anchor."

the commissioned vessels that plundered indiscriminately. Nevertheless the Porto Rico authorities took revenge the next year, as will appear further on. The *Palmira* carried a long eighteen and eight short ones—she was a formidable craft of her kind.

Lieutenant William Howard Allen, who had had command of the *Argus*, after her captain was killed in the fight with the *Pelican*, was at this time in command of the *Alligator*. On No-

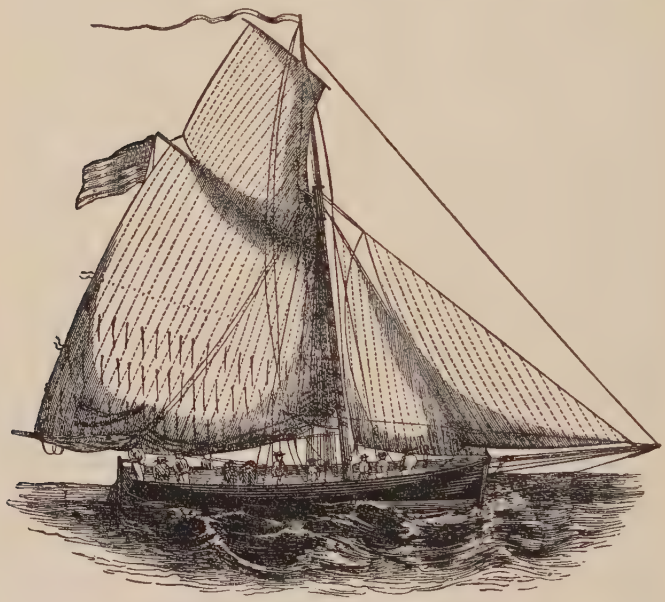
vember 8, 1822, he went after a force of pirates three hundred strong that, with three schooners, had five merchantmen in their possession, only forty-five miles east of Matanzas, Cuba. He found them in shoal water and ordered away the boats, himself taking the lead. The pirates, far outnumbering Allen's force, made something of a resistance. Allen was struck twice and mortally wounded, but his men kept on and routed the pirates, capturing one of their schooners and freeing the merchantmen. Fourteen of the pirates were killed and an unknown number wounded.

In 1823 Captain David Porter, of *Essex* fame, took command of the force operating against the pirates. Farragut came with him, but not in command of a vessel. He added five twenty-oar barges to his fleet, and eight small schooners of three guns each, together with a small steam ferryboat from New York called the *Sea-gull*.

Captain Porter desired first of all to get the help of the local governments, and sailed to Porto Rico; and on March 3, 1823, sent the *Greyhound*, under Captain John Porter, in with a letter to the governor. Later the *Fox*, Captain W. H. Cocke, was sent in for an answer. As the *Fox* entered the port a fort opened fire on her and Cocke was killed. The port authorities explained the matter, on inquiry, by say-

ing that the governor had gone away, leaving orders to fire on any suspicious craft entering the harbor, and the *Fox* looked suspicious in their eyes; but it was believed that the firing was intended to sink the *Fox* in revenge for the capture of the piratical *Palmira*.

At Cape Cruz a pirate resort was discovered



A Ship-of-War's Launch.
From the "Kedge Anchor."

that fully sustains the most ghastly stories of the sensational novel writers. It was captured by crews of the *Greyhound* and *Beagle*, under Captains Lawrence Kearny and J. S. Newton, after a desperate resistance. The pirate com-

mander had a wife, who fought by his side with a fierceness equal to his own, and it was with great difficulty that she was overcome. When the fight was over an exploration showed that a number of caves had been used by the pirates. Bales of merchandise in some, and quantities of human bones in others, told a horrible story.

In April of 1823 the twenty-oar barges *Gallinipper*, Lieutenant William H. Watson, and the *Mosquito*, Lieutenant William Inman, chased a pirate schooner and a barge into the bay where Allen had lost his life the year before, and there the pirates anchored with springs on their cables, and made a fight. There were over seventy of the pirates, and the Americans were short-handed, having only thirty-one, all told. But they raised the cry of "Remember Allen!" and made a dash that drove the pirates overboard helter-skelter. The blood of the Yankee sailors had grown hot at the cry, and without stopping to take the pirate vessels they rowed in among the swimming cutthroats, and plied right and left with pikes and cutlasses, so that few if any escaped either death or capture, and there were but five prisoners. These were given to the Spanish authorities, and executed. The schooner had been captured from the Spanish. The pirate leader was known as Diabolito—a word that means "little devil." He was killed while swimming for the shore.

On the whole, the work of Porter's fleet was rapidly clearing the waters of the pirate plague. Nevertheless, when he compelled a Porto Rico Alcalde to show a proper respect for an American officer, the United States Government drove him from the navy. The trouble began near the end of 1824. The storehouse of the American consul at St. Thomas had been robbed, and Lieutenant Charles T. Platt of the *Beagle* learned that the property was concealed at Foxardo, a port on the east side of Porto Rico. Going to Foxardo, Platt landed with Midshipman Robert Ritchie and made known the *Beagle's* errand.

Unquestionably Platt made one mistake. He went ashore in the clothes of a common citizen instead of wearing his uniform. If there is anything that incenses an official of one of the little American states, it is to have an official of a big state omit any of the forms and ceremonies usual to official business. The Foxardo officials pretended to doubt that Platt was an American officer, and demanded his commission. When this was exhibited they declared it a forgery, and that Platt was a pirate. Then they imprisoned both Platt and the midshipman, and treated both with great indignity before allowing them to return to the *Beagle*.

When the matter was reported to Porter, he took the *John Adams*, the *Beagle*, and the

Grampus to Foxardo, and sent a letter dated November 12, 1824, to the Alcalde, demanding an explanation. While he awaited a reply he saw the soldiers on shore preparing a battery to fire on the Americans, and a force was sent to spike the guns of this and another battery, a service that was performed without opposition. Finding that the Americans were in earnest, the Foxardo authorities apologized and expressed proper regrets for the treatment of Platt and the midshipman.

Sailor's Mess-table.

From the "Kedge Anchor."

Porter reported the whole matter home, but instead of approval received an order to return home and face a court-martial. After trial he was sentenced to suffer suspension for six months, when he resigned his commission.

It was a most unfortunate affair. It was a shameful thing to allow the hero of the *Essex* to leave the navy, but what was worse than that was

the fact that a precedent was established that rules to this day. An American naval officer protects an American citizen—protects even his own shipmates—from insult at the hands of a foreign official at his peril. When an American naval officer raises his sword between even the most contemptible of foreign officials and one who wears the American uniform the shadow of "the Foxardo affair," and of a long train of similar affairs, comes upon him to relax his grasp.

Captain Lewis Warrington having succeeded Porter, he found the work almost completed. Following in Porter's policy of keeping the lighter vessels actively employed, a number of actions similar to those already described occurred, and thereafter, save for an occasional gathering of the members of the old coast brotherhood, there was no outbreak of piratical doings. The steamer *Sea-gull* did not, so far as appears by the record, accomplish anything of moment; and yet the continued increase in the use of steam at sea did, after Porter broke up the pirate nests in 1823 and 1824, make it impossible for the black flag to float on the sea, even in sporadic cases.

CHAPTER XVI

DECATUR AND THE BARBARY PIRATES

SUPPOSING THE BRITISH WOULD SWEEP THE AMERICAN NAVY FROM THE SEAS DURING THE WAR OF 1812, THE DEY OF ALGIERS WENT CRUISING FOR YANKEE SHIPS, AND GOT ONE, WHILE TUNIS AND TRIPOLI GAVE UP TO THE BRITISH THE PRIZES THAT A YANKEE PRIVATEER HAD MADE—THE ALGERIAN WAS HUMBLED AFTER HE HAD LOST TWO WARSHIPS, AND THE OTHERS MADE PEACE ON THE YANKEES' TERMS WITHOUT THE FIRING OF A GUN—BRAVERY OF THE PIRATE ADMIRAL AND HIS CREW.

It is a remarkable fact that before the American sloop-of-war *Peacock* reached home from her cruise to the Straits of Sunda, the United States had waged and concluded with honor another war. This was the second war with the African pirates in the Mediterranean. As the reader will remember, the treaties concluded with these powers by the American naval officers after the war of 1802–1805 were more favorable to the United States than any treaty that had ever been concluded with them by any other power. Nevertheless, there were stipulations by which the United States still agreed to pay a blackmail tribute for the sake of peace.

And the reader will further recall the fact that this condition of affairs was due to the attitude of the British Government toward the pirates. England was entirely able to suppress the pirates, but instead of doing so she encouraged them, for the reason that in so doing she obtained almost a monopoly of the Mediterranean carrying trade for her merchant ships. She paid a small tribute to the pirates herself, and thus recognized the right of the pirates to prey on commerce in general. The tribute protected her ships, and the pirates were careful to see, as far as possible, that the ships of no other nation traded in that sea.

By the treaties at the end of the first war with the pirates, the United States merchants obtained the right to trade in these waters, and with Yankee enterprise they secured a share of the trade, which was extremely annoying to the British merchants, to whom the War of 1812 came as a very great relief. Just how the British Government operated against the United States through the pirates will appear farther on.

When war was declared to exist between the United States and Great Britain, Mr. Tobias Lear, who had been the private secretary of Washington, was the United States Consul-general located at Algiers. No sooner did the Dey of this nation hear of the new trouble of the

American nation than he called upon Consul Lear for the sum of $27,000, which he claimed was due on the annual tribute. . The United States had paid tribute by the Christian calendar, but the Dey demanded that it be paid by the Mohammedan, which threw the United States in arrears. Mr. Lear, in view of the trouble with England, yielded.

At about this time an old American whaler, the *Alleghany*, arrived at Algiers with certain supplies which the United States had sent by way of tribute. The Dey promptly declared these stores were of inferior quality, and said:

"The consul must depart, for I will not have a consul in my regency who does not cause everything to come exactly as he has ordered."

And Mr. Lear had to go in the *Alleghany*. The *Alleghany* sailed to Gibraltar, where she was taken by the British and her crew imprisoned. But before Mr. Lear left Algiers he saw two large British ships come into the port loaded with powder, shot, and other naval supplies to the value of $160,000, as a present to the Dey from the British Government.

Fitting out his fleet, that consisted of five frigates, three corvettes, and a lot of smaller vessels, the Dey made haste to go in search of Yankee merchantmen. Luckily only the brig *Edwin* of Salem, with nine men on board, was found, but in his anxiety to enslave American

A Typical Barbary Corsair.

From an engraving by Newton after a drawing by J. Charnock.

citizens, the pirate commander took a citizen of Virginia, whom he found on a Spanish vessel, and sold him, although the vessel went free.

Thereafter, in the course of the war with

England, a daring Yankee privateer, the *Abellino*, Captain Wyer, of Boston, sailed into the Mediterranean and took four prizes, which were sent into Tripoli and Tunis. The rulers of these states promptly delivered the prizes to British cruisers.

The war with England having ended, the Yankee navy was in prime condition for attending to these pirates, and just five days after the ratification of the treaty of peace with Great Britain, the United States declared war against them. Two squadrons were fitted out, one at Boston under Commodore William Bainbridge, and the other at New York under Commodore Stephen Decatur. The two were to unite in the Mediterranean, where Bainbridge was to assume command, because he was senior by right of the date of his commission.

Decatur got under way first, sailing on May 20, 1815. He carried with him Mr. William Shaler as Consul-general to the pirate states; and Shaler, Bainbridge, and Decatur were fully empowered to negotiate new treaties.

The squadron under Decatur included the new frigate *Guerrière* (rated a forty-four); the *Macedonian* (captured from the British), Captain Jacob Jones; the *Constellation*, Captain Charles Gordon; the sloop-of-war *Epervier* (captured from the British), Captain John Downes; the *Ontario*, Captain Jesse D. Elliott;

the brig *Firefly*, Captain George W. Rodgers; the brig *Flambeau*, Captain John B. Nicholson; the brig *Spark*, Captain Thomas Gamble; the schooner *Spitfire*, Captain A. J. Dallas; and the schooner *Torch*, Captain Wolcott Chauncey —in all, ten vessels and two hundred and ten guns.

The squadron at Boston was headed by the new Yankee seventy-four-gun line-of-battle ship *Independence*, and included the frigates *United States* and *Congress*, the sloop *Erie*, the brigs *Boxer*, *Chippewa*, *Saranac*, and *Enterprise*, and the sloop (one-masted) *Lynx*. The *Boxer* was the vessel captured by the Yankee brig *Enterprise*, and the *Enterprise* was the old favorite. But these vessels arrived in the Mediterranean too late to have any part in negotiating a treaty. Decatur had already done the work, and this is the more remarkable when one considers the force of the Algerian navy. As estimated by Maclay, the Algerian force afloat was a half stronger than Decatur's. It included five frigates armed with eighteens and twelves, six sloops-of-war armed with twelves, nines, and sixes, and a schooner—in all twelve vessels carrying three hundred and sixty guns. Moreover, these vessels were fully manned with able seaman, and their admiral, "Rais Hammida, was the terror of the Mediterranean." He "had risen from

the lowest to the highest place in the Algerian navy" (something that cannot be done in the navy of the American republic), and he had proved his prowess and valor over and again.

Moreover the harbor of Algiers, "formed by an artificial mole, was defended by double and triple rows of heavy batteries, . . . so that over five hundred pieces of ordnance bore upon the maritime approaches of the place." In fact, when England in the year 1816 made war on the Dey, "five ships of the line, five frigates, four bomb ketches and five gun-brigs were deemed by the Lords of the Admiralty too small a force."

On June 15, 1815, Decatur's squadron arrived off Tangiers at the mouth of the Strait of Gibraltar, and learned that the pirate admiral, Rais Hammida, in his forty-six-gun frigate *Mashouda*, had sailed up the Mediterranean two days before, intending to call at Carthagena.

At this the entire American squadron sailed into the Mediterranean and after a brief call at Gibraltar came in sight of the *Mashouda* at daylight on the morning of June 17. The enemy when first seen was lying-to under topsails off Cape Gata, but heading toward the African shore. The pirate admiral was wholly unsuspicious of the character of the approach-

ing Yankee squadron until the *Constellation*, the nearest of the squadron, was but a mile away. At that time the American flag was set on the *Constellation* by a mistake. Decatur ordered the British flag set on all the other ships, but Hammida had taken alarm, and spreading his wings like a flushed partridge —making sail with a rapidity that excited the admiration of the Yankees—he headed for Algiers, not far away.

There was an easterly wind, but the Algerian soon found that the *Constellation* was heading him off, and when the Yankee opened fire on him he tacked about and headed for a neutral port on the north shore. At this the squadron tacked in pursuit, and the flag-ship *Guerrière* soon overhauled the enemy.

Pirate though he was, it is impossible not to feel some admiration for the Algerian admiral and his crew in the fight that followed. It was one ship against a squadron and small guns against large, but Rais Hammida never thought of surrender. On the contrary, the pirates opened with muskets as the brig *Guerrière* ranged up. A man was shot from the *Guerrière's* wheel and others were injured, but Decatur waited until he was yardarm to yardarm and then fired a broadside that made the enemy shiver. The pirate admiral had been wounded by a shot from the *Constella-*

tion and was unable to stand, but he had bravely remained on deck, lying on a couch. Now a forty-two-pounder shot struck him at the first broadside of the *Guerrière*, cutting him entirely in two.

A second broadside from the *Guerrière* followed and then she ranged ahead of the *Mashouda's* bow. At that the pirates up helm and strove to run for it. This brought the brig *Epervier* fairly under the pirate's bows. Captain Downes commanded the *Epervier*, and Downes was a seaman fit to be associated with Captain Stewart of the *Constitution*, for by backing and filling his sails he was able to give the pirate no less than nine broadsides in twenty-five minutes, at the end of which time the *Mashouda's* commander yielded to the inevitable and hauled down his flag.

Decatur said he had never seen a ship handled more skilfully than the *Epervier* was, or a battery worked better than hers, but of course, the pirate was "completely mobbed," and surrendered to the squadron, not to one ship. The *Macedonian* was in at the surrender and not six hours' sail away.

The fire of the Yankees seem to have been ill-directed, when the results are considered, for only thirty were killed and wounded out of the four hundred and thirty-six in the pirate crew.

Master Commandant William Lewis and Midshipmen Howell and Hoffman took charge of the prize, and she was escorted to Carthagena by the *Macedonian*.

On June 19th, near Cape Palos, a brig was chased ashore by a small vessel of the American squadron. She proved to be the *Estido*, a twenty-two-gun brig of the Algerian navy. Eighty prisoners were taken from her, and twenty-three dead were found on her decks. Her crew had numbered one hundred and eighty, but many escaped ashore in her boats. Having been taken within the three-mile limit she was eventually given up to the Spanish Government.

Decatur was now ready to treat with the Dey. Arriving off Algiers on June 28th, he summoned the Swedish consul, Mr. Norderling, on board, by means of signals. The Algerian captain of the port came with Mr. Norderling, arriving at noon. It was found that Mr. Norderling could not act for the Algerian Government, so the demand of the President of the United States was sent to the Dey by the hands of the Captain of the Port. Meantime, Decatur asked the Algerian where the Algerian Navy could be found.

"By this time it is safe in some neutral port," replied the Algerian.

"Not all of it," replied Decatur. "The

Decatur's Squadron at Anchor off the City of Algiers, June 30, 1815.

From an engraving by Munger and Jocelin.

frigate *Mashouda* and a twenty-two-gun brig are already captured, and your Admiral Hammida is killed."

In language not too polite the Algerian expressed his doubts about this assertion, when Decatur produced the first lieutenant of the *Mashouda*, who confirmed the news. The Captain of the Port at once changed his bearing entirely and begged that hostilities might cease until a treaty could be negotiated on shore. To this Decatur replied:

"Hostilities will not cease until a treaty is made; and a treaty will not be made anywhere but on board the *Guerrière*."

Next day the Captain of the Port came out with full powers to negotiate. The Americans presented their draft of a treaty. The Algerian objected to returning the property taken from the Americans enslaved by the pirates, saying that it had been distributed among many hands. Decatur replied:

"As it was unjustly taken, it must be restored or paid for."

That settled this point, but when it came to relinquishing all tribute, the Algerian hesitated. Nor did he like to pay $10,000 to the owners of the Salem brig *Edwin* that had been captured. He pleaded that the brig was taken under a previous dynasty, and told what a great man the present ruler, Omar the Terrible, was.

Decatur and the Algerian

But Decatur refused to concede a truce of even three hours, saying:

"Not a minute! If your squadron appears before the treaty is actually signed by the Dey, and before the American prisoners are on board, I shall capture it."

In fact the only concession that Decatur would make was to agree to return the *Mashouda*. But this was not to appear in the treaty; it was to be as an act of grace on the part of the Americans.

The Algerian hastened ashore with the treaty, after arranging that a white flag should be displayed in his boat on returning, in case the treaty was signed and the prisoners on board.

An hour after the Algerian left, an Algerian man-of-war appeared in the east. The Americans cleared their ships for action, but before the squadron got fairly under way the Captain of the Port was seen coming with a white flag afloat. Everything had been conceded to the Americans.

It is said that when the ten liberated captives arrived on board the *Guerrière*, some knelt down as soon as they reached the deck to give thanks to God, while others hastened to kiss the American flag that once more waved over them.

And it is further said that the British consul stood by in the Dey's palace while the Dey was

signing the treaty with the United States, and ordering the money and the prisoners delivered. When all was done, the Dey's prime-minister turned upon the British consul and said :

" You told us that the Americans would be swept from the seas in six months by your navy, and now they make war upon us with some of your own vessels which they have taken."

The fate of the liberated captives was sad. They were placed on the *Epervier* with the treaty, and she was sent under Lieutenant John Templer Shubrick to the United States. They sailed with happy hearts, after their cruel life as slaves, but the *Epervier* never reached port nor ever was heard from after passing the Strait of Gibraltar.

With Shubrick "were Captain William Lewis and Lieutenant B. I. Neale, who had married sisters on the eve of their departure for the Mediterranean, and were now returning after the successful termination of the war with Algiers. Lieutenant I. I. Yarnell (who had distinguished himself in the battle of Lake Erie) and Lieutenant John T. Drury also were on board. Midshipman Josiah Tattnall, afterward commander of the celebrated *Merrimac*, was in the *Epervier* just before she sailed, but exchanged places with a brother officer in the *Constellation*."

Sailing from Algiers to Tunis, where he arrived on July 25th, Decatur learned from the American consul, Mordecai M. Noah, that $46,000 would square the account for the prizes to the Yankee privateer *Abellino* which the Bey had turned over to the British cruiser *Lyra*. Mr. Noah took the demand for indemnity to the Bey. As Maclay tells the story, the Bey said, musingly:

"I know this admiral; he is the same one who in the war with Sidi Jusef, of Trablis, burned the frigate. Hum! Why do they send wild young men to treat for peace with old powers? Then you do not speak the truth. You went to war with England, a nation with a great fleet, and said you took her frigates in equal fight. Honest people always speak the truth."

Noah pointed out the *Guerrière*, the *Macedonian*, and another vessel as ships taken from the British, which pretty nearly, if not literally, confirmed the story of captured frigates, and the Bey submitted. And when the award was paid, another British consul listened to a stinging rebuke from a Tunis official who said:

"You see, sir, what Tunis is obliged to pay for your insolence. I ask you whether you think it just, first to violate our neutrality and then leave us to be destroyed, or pay for your aggressions?"

Return of Bainbridge's Squadron from the Mediterranean in 1815.

From an engraving by Leney of a drawing by M. Corné.

Tripoli was reached on August 5th, and the Bashaw, after some grumbling, paid $25,000 and released two Danes and eight Neapolitans to square the account for having delivered two of the *Abellino's* prizes to the British, after which "the *Guerrière's* band was landed and treated the natives to a purely American rendering of 'Hail Columbia.'"

In October Decatur took his squadron back to Gibraltar, where it joined the squadron under Bainbridge. The gathering of such a powerful fleet of Yankee war-ships—especially of war-ships with such significant names as most of the Yankee ships carried—had an exceedingly disquieting effect upon the British officials, and for a time they found themselves unable to treat the American officers with common civility. After a number of the British had been killed in duels, however, the Americans found themselves able to go ashore without suffering insult.

Later, the Dey of Algiers succeeded in negotiating a treaty with the British, represented by Lord Exmouth, under which the British, in spite of an immense fleet to back them, agreed to pay $400,000 for the release of certain captives. His success in this made the Dey feel very badly about his treaty with Decatur. Consul Shaler was compelled to haul down his flag and leave, but the timely arrival and prompt

action of an American squadron once more inclined the Dey to peace. The appearance of the same squadron off Tunis and Tripoli soothed the rulers there, also, after they had been made restive by European consuls, and from that time to this there has been no war between the United States and the Barbary pirates.

CHAPTER XVII

LED A HARD LIFE AND GOT FEW THANKS

WORK THAT NAVAL MEN HAVE HAD TO DO IN OUT-OF-THE-WAY PARTS OF THE WORLD IN TIMES OF PEACE—CHASING SLAVERS ON THE AFRICAN COAST WHEN SLAVE-OWNERS RULED THE YANKEE NATION—THE AMERICAN FLAG A SHIELD FOR AN INFAMOUS TRAFFIC—CAPTURE OF THE *MARTHA* AND THE *CHATSWORTH*—TEACHING MALAYANS TO FEAR THE FLAG—STORIES OF PIRATICAL ASSAULTS ON YANKEE TRADERS, AND THE NAVY'S PART IN THE MATTER—A CHINESE ASSAULT ON THE AMERICAN FLAG—"BLOOD IS THICKER THAN WATER"—A MEDAL WELL-EARNED BY A WARLIKE DISPLAY IN TIME OF PEACE.

Of the work done by the Navy between the War of 1812 and the Civil War, there was no part that was more disagreeable or quite so thankless as that of watching the slavers on the coast of Africa. It is becoming in an American, whatever his personal beliefs may have been in the old days, to speak of the slave-trade with humility. And this is true not alone because human beings were kept in slavery in the United States until a frightful civil war well-nigh destroyed the country, but because Northern capitalists, men who lived where the self-

righteous gave thanks because their hands did not hold the slave in bondage—these Northern capitalists were the most ingenious and persistent dealers in slaves, and the most devilish in the treatment of the unfortunates, known to the transatlantic slave-trade.

In the treaty with England that ended the War of 1812 it was agreed that the United States would assist the mother country in putting down the trade in slaves then carried on between the African and the American coasts. There is, perhaps, nothing more humiliating in the history of the American Republic than the true story of what followed in carrying out the American agreement. How could it be otherwise? For the American nation was ruled by men who believed that slavery was "a Divine institution." However shocking such a belief must appear to the younger generations of Americans, there are old heads at the South who still hold it. The writer hereof has heard a bishop speak with enthusiasm of the influence of the old time "patriarchal" slave-owners in "turning the hearts of the slaves to Christ"—an influence "alas!" that is now gone! If this be possible in 1897, one may believe that in 1827—even in 1847 and 1857—the American slave-owner was not sincere when he professed a desire to stop the exportation of slaves from Africa.

Because slave-owners ruled the nation, it is certain that if there was ever a duty to which the American naval seaman was assigned that was weighed down with difficulties and thankless when performed, it was that of chasing slavers on the African coast.

It is impossible to give here even a brief sketch of the work done during the years after the signing of that treaty, but enough may be told to well illustrate its character.

As already intimated, Americans were the most persistent and ingenious promoters of the trade. This was chiefly due to two causes. The first was that the American flag was *prima facie* evidence that a vessel was an honest trader and it preserved the ship from search by any other cruiser than an American man-of-war. In the next place, the Yankees could build the swiftest and cheapest ships afloat.

To the honor of the Anglo-Saxon race be it said that the British Government led in the attempts to down the damnable traffic, but in the face of the American flag the British cruiser was powerless. And the American cruisers were quite as anxious to see that the American flag was respected, even when displayed on a most suspicious craft, as they were to capture slavers. No one can find fault with this keen desire to protect the honor of the flag, but if the American Government had been in the

hands of men who were not slave-owners, a way would have been found by which the honor of the flag could have been preserved and yet permit a British captain to search all suspicious vessels within certain limits along the African coast.

The Yankee slavers built their vessels, at the last, especially for the traffic. In the usual course, they fitted out the craft as an honest trader. They took on as passengers certain Portuguese, Italian, or Brazilian men. They sailed to the coast of Africa, and there the American crew went ashore and the passengers took possession.

It was recorded that the appearance of a British cruiser stopped such a transaction midway. The Yankee crew, while en route ashore, saw the cruiser and hastened back on board to hoist the Stars and Stripes and resume the guise of honest traders. To ferret out these rascals was the task of the American naval officers.

But in many cases the slavers depended on eluding the cruisers altogether. The vessels were built with leaner models than even the Yankee privateers had boasted, and they were sparred to carry a tremendous spread of canvas. In the later years of the traffic the hunt was so close that a resort was had to smaller craft—vessels that could even take down both sails

and spars when the royals of a cruiser were seen, and then, by the use of oars, crawl away out of the cruiser's course. The lateen rig of the Mediterranean usually served these little slavers. It was easily hidden, and on occasion would give good speed to a small boat. They were most picturesque boats, especially when seen under full chase running from a cruiser. But other small boats were used, and there was one case on record where a common long-boat from an old-fashioned merchant-ship was seen in mid-Atlantic with a single lug sail set and thirty slaves on board.

It was in the torrid zone. The coast was full of malaria. Sleepless vigilance was required. Boat expeditions into such streams as the Congo in search of concealed slavers of the smaller kind were frequently required. In the language of Lieutenant (afterward Admiral) Andrew Hull Foote, "the matured villainy of the world" gathered on the coast of Africa, and no labor or vigilance could be spared in pursuing it.

Foote was stationed on the coast two years, and his experience will serve to illustrate that of all others. He reached Porto Praya on December 21, 1849, in the brig *Perry*, and was sent by the Commodore south along the coast to examine such slave-stations as Salinas, Benguela, Loanda, Ambriz, and so on. He reached Ben-

guela after a passage of forty-one days, and found there a brig which the British had captured with eight hundred slaves on board. The brig had come from Rio Janeiro under the American flag, and so had easily passed the British cruiser. But when she tried to get away, the cruiser found in some way that she really had slaves on board and took her.

Foote was cordially welcomed by the British officers, and there is no doubt of his sincere desire to stop the slave traffic. Certainly no American did more than he in this work. But his first task was to look after the rights of an American brigantine, the *Louisa Beaton.* She had been overhauled by the British cruiser *Dolphin* and detained, for a time, seventy miles off land. She had the papers of an honest trader, and after a prolonged correspondence Foote secured a disavowal from the British commander together with an offer of indemnity to the brigantine. And yet that brigantine was a slaver, and her adroit captain got away at last with a full cargo of blacks.

However, Foote made up somewhat for the failure to capture this vessel *flagrante delictu* by taking the *Martha.* She was overhauled on June 7, 1850, between Ambriz and Loanda. She was a big ship, and as the American cruiser came near, the *Martha* hoisted the American flag and hove to. Foote's first lieutenant put

off to examine her. As he rounded her stern he saw her name painted there and that her home port was New York. Nevertheless, as soon as her crew recognized the uniform of the lieutenant as of the American Navy, they hauled down the American flag and raised that of Brazil. When the lieutenant reached her deck her captain claimed that she could not be lawfully searched when under the Brazilian flag, and denied having papers of any kind. This gave the lieutenant a hold on the ship, for he declared that if she had no papers she must be a pirate.

Meantime, the captain had thrown overboard his writing-desk, but it failed to sink. It was picked up and papers were found in it showing the captain was an American citizen and that three-fifths of the ship belonged to an American merchant in Rio.

On seizing and searching her, the lieutenant found one hundred and seventy-six casks of water holding one hundred and fifty gallons each, and one hundred and fifty barrels of farina for food. A slave-deck was laid. There were big iron boilers for cooking the farina; there were irons for securing the slaves; there were wooden spoons for feeding them. The captain then admitted that he was after slaves, and said that but for the arrival of the *Perry* he would have got away that night with 1,800 of them.

He was playing for a great stake. The *Martha*, with her crew in irons, was sent to New York and there condemned.

After this, Foote captured the American brigantine *Chatsworth*. There was sufficient evidence to convince Foote of her character but not enough for a court, and she was let go. Later she was again overhauled, and this time it appeared that she had two complete sets of papers to cover the assorted cargo of an honest trader, and she was sent home and condemned.

Foote, in writing about this capture to a friend, under date of September 25, 1850, said:

"Our orders are so stringent that no commander will capture a slaver unless he assume great responsibility. I took the *Chatsworth* in the face of a protest of $22,000 from her captain and supercargo; and still she and the *Martha* must be condemned."

Under the law the officers, and even the crews, of condemned slavers were guilty of piracy. That they justly merited the penalty of death will not now be questioned. We are forgetting the tales of the horrors of the passage across the Atlantic—the tortures of those who were "kennelled in a picaroon," the "slaves that men threw overboard;" but we remember enough to know that the slaver crews deserved the death the law prescribed. But how was a nation that coddled the slave-owner to hang a

slave-dealer? It could not and it never did do so.

In short, the American naval officers cruised to and fro under the tropical sun until the pitch melted from the deck-seams. They occasionally met another cruiser, and, on the theory that misery loves company, they found some relief in exchanging visits. They saw some strange scenes on the African shore. They learned something of tornadoes and other freaks of the weather. They occasionally found a slaver with the slaves on board, and, in the face of protests, they took ships that posed as honest traders but were really slavers.

On some cruises they took the fever and died. On the *Perry* not a man was lost in two years. Foote was the original prohibitionist of the Navy. It was he who, as the sailors used to sing,

> Raised our pay
> Ten cents a day
> And stopped our grog forever.

By caring for the sanitary conditions of the ship he saved his crew, and it was to this rather than to the efficiency of his work against slavers, that he owed the favor with which his cruise was regarded by the officials of the Navy Department.

Another kind of naval work that is never pleasant, that always involves danger, and yet

never gives the men a chance to earn fame, is that of chastising the more or less wild coast tribes in out-of-the-way parts of the world for carrying, to an extreme, the greed and aggression they have observed in white traders. Although there are always two sides to every affray, the story of the white trader is the one that gets printed; what the aborigines might have said is never learned. No matter—a Yankee ship is assaulted and some of her crew killed, so it is necessary to teach the natives that they must not do such things. No inquiry is made into the provocation offered by the Yankee crew, but on the *ex parte* statement of the probable aggressor a man-of-war is ordered to visit the scene of bloodshed and take such vengeance as is possible on the tribe. And the man-of-war must go and do as bid, whether the naval officers like the task or not. So it comes to pass that all maritime governments when avenging injuries done to their merchantmen are not so very different from those tribes of American red men who, on failing to find the individual who had killed one of their number, took revenge by killing the first member of the aggressor's race they happened to find.

The story of the trouble with the people of Sumatra, growing out of an assault on the ship *Friendship*, Captain Endicott, of Salem, in 1831; and again for an assault on the Amer-

ican ship *Eclipse*, Captain Wilkins, in 1838, will show what kind of work the navy had to do in such cases.

The *Friendship* was at anchor off Quallah Battoo, on the northwest coast of Sumatra, buying pepper of the natives, on February 7, 1831. The pepper was brought off through the surf in small boats that were moored, when loading, in a stream that enters the ocean there. Captain Endicott, Second Mate John Barry, and four seamen were on shore superintending the packing of the pepper. When the first boat was loaded and manned it headed down the stream, but instead of putting out to sea it stopped at the beach, and Mr. Endicott noticed that more men got into her. However, he was only a little suspicious of trouble, for he supposed the surf was worse than usual and more men were needed, so he merely detailed two seamen to watch the boat, and went on packing pepper as before.

After a little the seamen on watch saw a commotion on the ship, men were running to and fro, and in a moment four sailors were seen to jump over the rail into the sea. Captain Endicott was warned, and, jumping into a second boat he had brought ashore, he and his men pulled down stream for life.

In their haste they left their arms behind, and that was unfortunate, for the natives

swarmed to catch them. Worse yet, they were not accustomed to taking a boat through the surf, and several native canoes, full of armed men, gathered outside ready to kill the whites when their boat should be overturned by the surf.

At this critical moment a neighboring chief, known to the whites as Po Adam, came to their rescue. He not only guided the boat through the surf, but by brandishing his sabre overawed the waiting natives in the canoes, and Captain Endicott got safely out to sea. There he picked up the four sailors who were swimming from the *Friendship*, and then all went to a settlement some distance away, called Muckie.

The sailors said that no less than twenty natives had come off to the ship in the first boat. At first they had scattered over the deck with no arms in sight and acting as if full of curiosity. The mate, who had at first been alarmed by the numbers, was deceived by their apparent innocence, and began taking the pepper on board. At that two or three natives sauntered carelessly to his side and, as he leaned over the rail to get hold of a package of pepper, they drove their daggers into his back. Five of the ship's crew ran to aid the mate, but the natives killed two of these and made prisoners of the other three, whom they reserved, as alleged,

The Action at Quallah Battoo, February 6, 1832.

From an aquatint by Smith of a drawing made on board the "Potomac" in the offing.

for torture. The remainder of the crew, four in number, jumped overboard.

At Muckie were three American ships, and these volunteered to go to Quallah Battoo and demand the return of the *Friendship*. The chief of the settlement told them to "come and take her," when the demand was made, and with the aid of the guns that their ships carried, they did it. But the ship had been looted, the natives getting among other things $12,000 in coin. The total loss to the owners was placed at $40,000. So runs the story as told by the white traders.

A year later (February 6, 1832), the American frigate *Potomac*, Captain John Downes, anchored off Quallah Battoo. She was disguised as a merchantman, but when a boat went toward the shore taking soundings, the natives assumed a threatening attitude, in spite of the slovenly dress of the crew. Accordingly a midnight attack was planned and carried out. The natives had forts and cannon, and citadels within the forts, to which they retired when the outer fort-walls were carried, and where they fought with the desperation of men who preferred death to surrender. By daylight two of the forts were carried in spite of the fierce resistance. Even the women fought bravely. The wife of a chief was particularly mentioned for her courage and her skill with the sabre. They were

"fighting with that undaunted firmness which is characteristic of bold and determined spirits, and displaying such an utter carelessness of life as would have honored a better cause," as an officer of the *Potomac* wrote, but they could not stand against the superior tactics of the civilized race.

From one fort the Americans turned to another, and from this to three armed schooners, and from that to the main fort of all. Po Adam, who had rescued Captain Endicott, came with a body of his followers to aid the Americans, and at the last the whole settlement was overpowered and the chief fort blown up with its own magazine. The Americans had lost two killed and eleven wounded, and "of the Malays over one hundred were killed and two hundred wounded."

A number of the natives having rallied after the Americans went afloat, the *Potomac* stood in and opened fire with her long thirty-twos. Overawed as much by the sound as by the projectiles (so it is said) the natives sued for peace.

In spite of this display of the vengeful power of the United States, the American ship *Eclipse*, while loading at a settlement called Trabangan, twelve miles from Muckie, was captured by the natives. It was on the night of August 26, 1838. Two native canoes came along with a small quantity of pepper, arriving after

dark. The second mate, who had the watch on deck, recognized the leader of the party as an old acquaintance who had helped in loading the ship in former voyages, and allowed the natives to come on deck with their pepper. However, according to the ship's custom, he took their weapons and locked them up.

The captain at this time was asleep, but at about ten o'clock he came on deck. The work of weighing the pepper began. The leader of the natives, whose name was Lebbey Ousso, complained of the second mate's "distrust of an old friend," in taking away the weapons, and the captain foolishly ordered the daggers returned. A few minutes later, as they were pouring pepper into the scales, the captain cried: "I am stabbed." He died at once. An apprentice was killed at the same moment, while the second mate got a severe wound in the loins. Part of the crew plunged overboard and some took to the rigging. The cook, who was in irons for insubordination, begged for his life, and as the price of it showed where a lot of opium and coin to the amount of $18,000 were concealed. With this plunder the whole party, with the cook, fled.

As it happened, the American frigate *Columbia*, with the corvette *John Adams*, was making a tour of the world at that time, under Commodore George C. Reid. Having heard of this

assault the commodore went to investigate, arriving off Quallah Battoo on December 20, 1838. Here Po Adam made haste to board the flagship, and thereafter served as interpreter. It was said that the chief of Quallah Battoo had received $2,000 of the coin stolen from the *Eclipse*, and that one of the murderers of Captain Wilkins lived there. But after some days of palaver the chief failed to deliver up either the coin or the criminal, and the town was bombarded. From Quallah Battoo the squadron went to Muckie, whose chief had received some of the coin, as charged by native informers, and Muckie was first bombarded, and then burned by a landing party. No attack was made on Trabangan.

It appears from Taylor's account of this affair that one of the informers confessed that he was anxious to have Quallah Battoo destroyed in order that he might become chief of the region, while those who promoted the destruction of Muckie were sure to benefit by a transfer of Muckie's trade to their settlements. For it was a coast of small settlements ruled by jealous and quarrelling chiefs who lived by levying duty on pepper brought from the interior.

From Muckie the squadron returned to Quallah Battoo. The chief, known as Po Chute Abdullah, gave his note for $2,000, the

Bombardment of Muckie and Landing of a Force to Burn the Town.

From an engraving by Osborne in "The Flagship," published, 1840, by D. Appleton & Co.

sum that he confessed had been distributed among his people, after the assault on the *Eclipse*, and so escaped the ravages of a landing party.

"The women," said Po Adam, "cry, and the men, too, when the big ships come again."

The whole town had been bombarded for the misdeed of one man. The women and children had to face the cannon as well as the men. It was necessary, very likely, to teach the natives to respect the lives and property under the American flag. But there was no guarantee that the wily Yankee skipper would deal honestly with the natives. And there was no count of the women and children killed and mangled when the cannon were used to enforce the American demand.

Treaties were afterward made with a number of the chiefs who pledged themselves to protect Americans from all robbery and assault.

There is little doubt that the naval officers regarded it as a very sorry piece of duty that had to be attended to.

Much more stirring were the adventures of the Yankee seamen in the Chinese waters during the time that England was compelling the unfortunate orientals to buy British-India opium. The Chinese did not make the distinction between the two English-speaking nations which circumstances required, and in conse-

quence they received some severe punishment from the Americans. The most interesting event was in 1856. Captain Andrew Hull Foote of the *Portsmouth*, who, under Commodore Armstrong, was engaged in the work of protecting the Americans in Canton, established a number of fortified posts in the city, but beyond this did everything possible to keep the Americans clear of the "English and Chinese imbroglio." But there was fighting aplenty all around the Americans, both afloat and ashore; and it happened, on November 15, 1856, while Foote was rowing past one of the forts of the city, that the Chinese fired on him. The American flag was waved vigorously toward the fort, and Foote fired his revolver toward it by way of protest, but the firing continued until Foote was out of bearing of the guns. Another fort had still to be passed, and this one opened with grape-shot at a range of two hundred yards.

The next day the forts were bombarded by the *Portsmouth*. On the 20th the *San Jacinto*, the *Portsmouth*, and the *Levant* bombarded the fort that had been first guilty of assault, and then Foote with four howitzers and a force of two hundred and eighty-seven men, all told, landed. Crossing the rice-fields and wading a creek waist-deep, they attacked the fort in the rear, when the Chinese fled, although the fort

was a massive stone structure with walls several feet thick, and contained fifty-three cannon. The marines killed more than forty of the Celestial soldiers who fled, and so completed the rout.

The guns of the captured fort were turned on the fort that was next in line, and that was soon silenced. Meantime a Chinese force estimated at more than 3,000 came from Canton to whelm the Americans, but a single howitzer with its sailor crew, aided by the muskets of the marines, drove them away with great slaughter. It was not glorious work but it was absolutely necessary to the preservation of American citizens and their property.

During the two or three days that followed other forts were taken, until the American flag had been planted on four of the forts. Admiral Belknap, who was then a master, is mentioned for his gallantry while in charge of one of the launches. The Americans in the course of the work lost seven killed and twenty wounded. The Chinese said they lost five hundred in all, but Foote estimated their loss at about two hundred and fifty. At any rate, the Chinese of Canton have not yet forgotten either the *Portsmouth* or her captain.

Three years later an American naval officer gave the English-speaking nation a catch-phrase that is likely to live in the literature of

both England and the United States after the deed of the man who used it is long forgotten. It was in 1859, when the English and French were bombarding the Chinese forts in the Peiho River. On July 25th, while some English gunboats were removing obstructions from the river, the Chinese opened a severe fire on them. Captain Josiah Tattnall, whose bravery before Vera Cruz is mentioned elsewhere, was a witness of the attack in the chartered steamer *Toey-wan*. Tattnall could not look on such an affray without taking part in it, even if he were of a neutral nation. Turning to a junior officer he said, "Blood is thicker than water," and ordered his boat manned. Getting into it he rowed to the flagship of the British flotilla. His boat was struck by a shot that killed the coxswain and wounded Lieutenant Stephen Decatur Trenchard, but he boarded the British gunboat and with his crew helped to fight the Chinese. He afterward used the *Toey-wan* in towing up the British reserves. It is certain that no action contrary to the law of nations ever did more to promote good feeling between the rival English-speaking nations.

What is known as the Koszta incident in the Mediterranean shall serve to close this chapter on the fighting work of the American navy, in time of peace, previous to the civil war. It is particularly worth the attention of the Ameri-

The Steamer *Toey-wan.*

"Blood is Thicker than Water."—Josiah Tattnall going to the Assistance of the English Gun-boats at Peiho River.

From a painting, by a Chinese artist, owned by Mr. Edward Trenchard.

can people, for the reason that in these later days some such an example seems to be needed. American citizens who now travel in foreign countries have not infrequently had occasion to wonder whether their Government had an arm that was strong enough to protect them when beyond the borders of the nation.

One Martin Koszta, an Austrian by birth, after having, in legal form, taken out his first papers as a citizen of the United States, was found in Smyrna by the Austrian authorities, and carried on board the Austrian war-ship *Hussar*, because he had, in some way, offended the Austrian Government. The American sloop-of-war *St. Louis* was at that time at anchor in Smyrna harbor, and an appeal was made through the American consul to Captain Duncan Nathaniel Ingraham, commanding her, in behalf of Koszta. Captain Ingraham applied to the captain of the *Hussar* for the man, but the Austrian, having a heavier ship, declined to deliver him up. As Ingraham understood his duty he was compelled by it to get the man first and attend to the necessary diplomatic correspondence and consideration of the facts of the matter afterward. Clearing his ship for action he laid her alongside the *Hussar*, and setting a time-limit, said he would have the man or a fight. He got the man.

It is admitted that ill-disposed people have

become citizens of the United States in order to use the American flag as a cover for nefarious deeds. So the American Government has a delicate and difficult task to perform whenever its power is invoked for the protection of an American citizen who is in trouble with the authorities of another nation. But because naturalized Americans have not infrequently received harsh treatment when in their native countries, and especially because American law presumes that every accused person is innocent of wrong-doing until proven guilty to the satisfaction of a jury of his peers, it is absolutely essential to the preservation of American rights that every American naval officer hold to Captain Ingraham's understanding of duty. First get the man and then let the State Department settle the diplomatic matters.

The Congress, by a joint resolution on August 4, 1854, requested the President to give Captain Ingraham a medal in token of the nation's appreciation of this defence of American rights.

CHAPTER XVIII

IN THE WAR WITH MEXICO

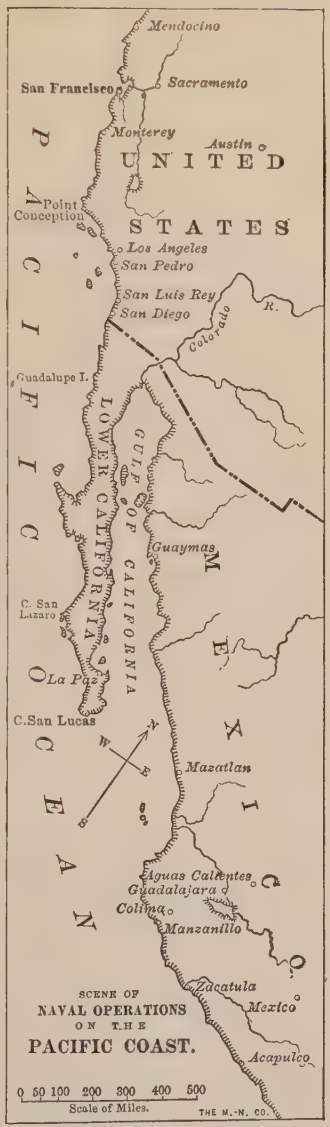
THOMAS AP CATESBY JONES, THE HERO OF LAKE BORGNE, STRUCK THE FIRST BLOW OF THE WAR — OPERATIONS ALONG THE PACIFIC COAST THAT INSURED THE ACQUISITION OF CALIFORNIA—STOCKTON AND "PATHFINDER" FRÉMONT OPERATE TOGETHER — WILD HORSES AS WEAPONS OF OFFENCE — THE *SOMERS* OVERTURNED WHILE CHASING A BLOCKADE RUNNER—JOSIAH TATTNALL BEFORE VERA CRUZ—WHEN SANTA ANNA LANDED—THE YANKEE SAILORS IN A SHORE BATTERY—THE HARD FATE OF ONE OF THE BRAVEST AMERICAN OFFICERS.

In beginning the story of the Navy's part in the war between Mexico and the United States, it is interesting to note that the first overt act of aggression on the part of the United States was made by a naval officer, because of his distrust of the British Government. It was in the year 1842, a long time before war was actually declared to exist. As the reader will remember, the present State of California was then a most inviting part of the Mexican domain—so inviting, indeed, that the long-headed statesmen of England were puzzling their brains to find a way of getting control of it without a too

great expense of trouble and money. Just how far they would have gone in their efforts can never be known, of course, but no one now doubts that they were considering the matter. This is not to say that their wishes were discreditable; from the point of view of the American leaders at that time, the British statesmen were merely enterprising, for the Americans were looking at California with a thought quite as covetous as any that ever animated the mind of an Englishman. Mexico was but a feeble power. Stirring American frontiersmen had pushed over into the Mexican state of Texas and, wresting it from the Mexican rule, had set up an independent government. There were other restless Americans who were making their way into California. The American statesmen could not quite see their way to taking possession of the domain on the Pacific, but this they could do: They could and they would prevent England's grasping it. To this end a strong squadron was ordered around Cape Horn to the Pacific, and the command of it was given to the hero of Lake Borgne, Captain Thomas ap Catesby Jones,—he who with less than two hundred brave seamen on open gun-boats withstood for an hour the shock of a British flotilla, manned by nine hundred and eighty men, besides the officers. His fleet included the brave old frig-

ate *United States*, the captured sloop *Cyane*, the sloop-of-war *Dale*, and the schooner *Shark*.

On reaching Callao Commodore Jones "came upon a copy of Mexico's somewhat querulous complaints" about the neutrality that the United States Government showed in Mexico's war with Texas, while a Callao newspaper published as authentic news an article asserting that Mexico had just ceded California to England. This report appeared on September 6, 1842. As it happened, the big British frigate *Dublin*, flying a rear-admiral's flag, appeared off Callao that very evening. Heaving to for a short time, the Britisher had a look at



the Yankee squadron and then sailed away to the north without casting anchor.

That was a right curious action for a British frigate in those days, and Commodore Jones could explain it only by connecting it with the story that California had been ceded to England. And Jones, with his squadron, had been sent to the Pacific for the express purpose of preventing, by force if necessary, the establishment of a British Hong Kong on the coast of California. There was but one thing for him to do, and that was to up anchor and make all sail for California, and this he did. On October 19th he arrived in Monterey harbor, and, although nothing had been seen of the *Dublin*, he landed and took possession of the town.

A day later he learned that Monterey was still a Mexican town, and that Mexico and the United States were at peace. So he made such amends as he could, and surrendered the town to its lawful authorities.

Commodore Jones had carried out the policy of his Government, as he understood it, and his act was unquestionably approved by the Administration at Washington, but to conciliate the Mexicans Jones was recalled, though, of course, in nowise punished.

Of the causes of the war which followed, beginning by official declaration on May 13, 1846,

it is not the province of this history to treat, but the writer may be permitted to observe that no one of those who protest most loudly against Anglo-Saxon aggressiveness has ever shown how to stop it; and, what is of more importance, it is absolutely certain that every territory that has been taken by Anglo-Saxon aggressiveness has been greatly benefited by the rule of the aggressors, whether found in Asia, Africa, or on the Pacific coast of North America. Not because of commercial considerations, for these are commonly detestable, but because "the only race that possesses a proper conception of the two pillars that support civilization —Liberty and Justice"—is the Anglo-Saxon race, every humanitarian views with satisfaction the spreading power of the English-speaking people, even though it be "inevitable that causes of offence should arise." That policy which would confine the United States Government to its present geographical limits, however good the motives of its advocates may be, is short-sighted and wholly devoid of philanthropy.

No one proposes that as an act of justice either Calcutta or San Francisco shall be returned to their former rulers. The dominant race shall rule a willing world.

However false the declaration of the American Congress, made on May 13, 1846, that "war

exists, and notwithstanding all our efforts to avoid it, exists by the act of Mexico herself" (and certainly that statement was absolutely false), a war was unavoidable. It was absolutely impossible to prevent the expansion of the American Republic to the Pacific. The American Government tried repeatedly to buy the territory, but Mexico would not sell, and where individuals led the way their government was compelled to follow.

John B. Montgomery.
From a photograph.

When the war at last began, Captain John Drake Sloat, Commodore of the Pacific Squadron, was at Mazatlan, Mexico, in the frigate *Savannah*. He heard the news on June 8th, and sailed at once for Monterey, California, where he found the *Warren*, the *Cyane*, and the *Levant* at anchor. A force of two hundred and fifty men from the ships took possession of the town, and Commander John B. Montgomery of the *Portsmouth*, took possession of the settlement on San Francisco Bay the

Yours Truly
R. F. Stockton

R. F. Stockton.

From an engraving by Hall of a painting on ivory by Newton, 1840.

following week. The capitulation of Sutter's Fort, on the Sacramento, and a couple of other stations followed.

On July 19th "the Pathfinder," John C. Frémont, reached Monterey, and he, with one hundred and fifty riflemen, was sent in the *Cyane* to take possession of San Diego. The British liner *Collingwood*, bearing Admiral Sir George F. Seymour on board, was in port at this time, but there is no reason to suppose that the admiral was there in any other capacity than that of a spectator. Anyway, the *Collingwood* soon sailed from the coast. Then, on July 23d, Sloat gave up the command. He was in bad health and glad to escape the responsibility of the situation. The more vigorous Captain Robert Field Stockton took his place. Stockton's first move was against Los Angeles. He had only three hundred and fifty men, all told, in the party that he landed at San Pedro, the port of Los Angeles, and these were armed with only ninety muskets and a few carbines, but cutlasses and boarding-pikes were plentiful. Indeed, when some of the enemy appeared under a flag of truce, Stockton felt obliged to resort to a trick (since familiar to cowboys with cattle for sale) to make his force seem larger than it was. He marched them around some buildings in a way to make them appear as an army several times three hun-

Perry's Expedition Crossing the Bar at the Mouth of the Tabasco River.
From a lithograph designed and drawn on stone by Lieutenant H. Walke, U. S. N.

dred and fifty. He also covered up all the six-pounders in his artillery but left a thirty-two's muzzle peering out as if by an oversight. The trick, it is said, succeeded well. Anyway, Stockton, after falling in with Frémont's men, *en route*, entered Los Angeles without opposition on August 13, 1846. The next day the Mexican governor, Andres Pico, and General José Maria Flores, were paroled.

After that Stockton organized a state government with Frémont at the head of it. Frémont then went to Sacramento to recruit men for an expedition which Stockton planned against Acapulco (there were plenty of United States citizens in the California region), but before the expedition was ready news came that the Mexicans had rallied against Los Angeles, under the lead of ex-Governor Pico and General Flores, who had broken their parole. The garrisons at Santa Barbara were also reported in danger.

Sending the *Savannah* immediately from San Francisco to help the forces at the South, Stockton followed in the *Congress* on October 12th, having Frémont with "one hundred and seventy good men" along with him.

Meantime the Mexicans had risen against the Americans at Monterey. In fact, the Mexicans in the country far outnumbered the Americans, and it was only the difference in races

that prevented the Mexicans driving the Yankees into the sea. However, Stockton landed fifty men, under Midshipmen Baldwin and Johnson, at Monterey and hurried on to San Diego. Here an attack by the Mexicans was repulsed, and then came Brigadier-general Stephen W. Kearny over the mountains with one hundred men from Santa Fé, New Mexico. Kearny's men, aided by the sea forces, attacked the Mexicans at San Bernardino on the morning of December 6th; but were repulsed with a loss that was in a way significant, for eighteen were killed to fifteen wounded, and Kearny and Captain Gillespie and Lieutenant Beale of the naval squad were among the wounded.

Meantime Captain Mervine of the *Savannah*, had tried to march to Los Angeles but had been driven back. The Mexicans were fighting fiercely for their homes.

However, Stockton was the man for the occasion. Kearny was reinforced by two hundred and fifty men, and then he was able to march to San Diego. Next a force of nearly seven hundred men was organized for another attack on Los Angeles. The road thither was one hundred and forty-five miles long, and it lay across a desert of sand. The weather was cold, the men were poorly clothed. The Mexicans were well mounted and accustomed to the country.

The Naval Expedition Under Commodore Perry Ascending the Tabasco River at the Devil's Bend.
From a lithograph designed and drawn on stone by Lieutenant H. Walke, U. S. N.

They disputed the advance stubbornly, and on one occasion, by a plan that proved successful on the plains of Patagonia once upon a time, they stampeded a herd of wild horses toward the American force; but the horses did not take kindly to the task of trampling down Yankee sailors.

At the San Gabriel River a decided stand was made against the Americans, but the sailors crossed over and carried the enemy's works by assault on January 8, 1847. That being the anniversary of the battle of New Orleans, the Yankees celebrated their triumph. They had lost two killed and nine wounded, while the Mexicans lost seventy killed and one hundred and fifty wounded. Los Angeles was retaken on January 15th.

Then Stockton left for the East and Commodore William Bradford Shubrick came to the coast with the liner *Independence* and the brig *Preble*.

Commodore Biddle also came to the coast at that time, and there was some little difficulty (not personal) over the question of which one was to have command, but it was settled by both doing the best they could for the Government while awaiting word from the Navy Department. Every Mexican port north of Acapulc· was blockaded, and at Mazatlan the custom-house was administered by the

Americans and some $300,000 collected on imports.

From a naval man's point of view the most interesting deeds on this coast were a few cutting-out expeditions. The *Cyane*, under Commander Dupont, after landing and spiking all the guns at San Blas, went up the Gulf of California to Guaymas. There Dupont found two Mexican gun-boats and a brig. On seeing the *Cyane* the Mexicans burned their gun-boats but hauled their brig in close to the beach, where several hundred soldiers were able to cover her from the houses along shore. There were also a number of cannon to keep off invaders.

S. F. Dupont.
From a photograph.

Captain Dupont, however, ordered out his launch and a cutter under Lieutenant G. W. Harrison, Lieutenant Higginson, and Midshipman Lewis. These, under cover of a fire from the *Cyane*, rowed in, cut the moorings and began towing the brig out unmolested. At that

The Tabasco Expedition Attacked by the Mexicans from the Chapparal.

From a lithograph designed and drawn on stone by Lieutenant H. Walke, U. S. N.

the *Cyane* stopped firing for a few moments, but the instant the *Cyane* stopped the Mexicans began. Then the *Cyane* opened again, when the Mexicans fled; but when the *Cyane* had to stop on account of the line of fire endangering her own men the Mexicans returned and began again. However, the *Cyane* finally drove them away by firing over her own boats, and the brig was towed out of the Mexican range and burned.

Lieutenant Harrison distinguished himself while the *Cyane* was blockading Mazatlan a little later. Mazatlan was dependent on the coasting trade for food, and the blockade reduced the town to a short allowance. Small schooners, however, managed to slip past in the shoal water alongshore, and the small boats of the *Cyane* had to look after them. On one occasion the *Cyane* was so far out from the beach that the Mexicans launched four big barges and put out to capture Harrison, who had three small boats with perhaps a third of the Mexican force in men. It was clear that Harrison could easily outrow the heavier boats of the Mexicans and escape, but instead of doing so he headed straight for them. The Mexicans were supported by field-guns on the beach, but they fled the moment the Yankee fire began to tell. The American seamen showed a feeling toward the enemy that was very much

like that the English had showed for the French sailors in the wars with Napoleon. And it is certain that the self-confidence was commonly justified in both wars. On September 30, 1847, Lieutenant Craven of the *Dale* pulled up a creek at Mulijé and captured a schooner that mounted a nine-pounder without opposition, although more than one hundred sol-

diers were in the town. And the next day he landed with eighty men and drove one hundred and forty Mexicans three miles inland.

However, the fights were in reality skirmishes between small bands on both sides. The Mexicans had no navy, and they did not gath-

Landing of Perry's Expedition Against Tabasco.

From a lithograph designed and drawn on stone by Lieutenant H. Walke, U. S. N.

er their soldiers in sufficient force at any point to permanently dislodge the Americans. Commodore Shubrick eventually had exclusive command of the American squadron, and he held the entire coast north of Acapulco. He would have held it to Salina Cruz or Ocos if he had had a few more men for garrison duty, but that was not necessary, for the hand of fate was against the Latin-Americans, and California was destined to become, because of the efficiency of the work of the Navy, a part of the United States; and it is now one of the most beautiful as well as one of the richest States of the American Union.

The work of the Navy in the Gulf of Mexico began during the battle of Palo Alto, when Commodore David Conner, who commanded the American squadron assembled off the mouth of the Rio Grande, landed about five hundred of his men to help protect the garrison which General Taylor had left at Point Isabel.

Unfortunately the Commodore had only ships of deep draught—vessels that could not cross the shoal water over the bars of Mexican streams. And the number of ships was small, so that when ordered to blockade the coast he was not able to do so for several months. As late as October, 1846, his force was "barely sufficient to close the ports of Vera Cruz and

Tampico." By October, however, he had three schooners and the shoal-draught steamer *Vixen*, and this force was subsequently increased to three light steamers and seven gun-boats, the whole flotilla carrying seventeen cannon.

Meantime, on August 7th, an attempt was made on Alvarado, an important port south-east of Vera Cruz. The ships were unable to get over the bar. On August 15th, a force was collected before Tuspan, but the brig *Truxton* grounded within reach of the shore-batteries and was captured, and the attack failed.

On October 16th a second attack was made on Alvarado. The steamer *Vixen* towed in the schooners *Bonita* and *Reefer* and a vigorous attack was made, but the steamer *McLane*, towing the *Nonita*, the *Petrel*, and the *Forward*, grounded. The steamer *Mississippi* had bombarded at long range the enemy's works, but it was ineffectual, and this attack failed. The failures created a deal of dissatisfaction in the United States, but it is a fact that Commodore Conner had a wretched outfit for the work. The small steamers were especially bad.

On the day following the Alvarado failure Commodore Conner sent an expedition under Captain Matthew Calbraith Perry, then commanding the *Mississippi*, against Frontera.

Commodore Perry's Expedition Taking Possession of Tuspan.

From a lithograph of a drawing by Lieutenant H. Walke, U. S. N.

Perry was afterward distinguished for opening Japan's ports to American commerce. He had with the *Mississippi* in his attack on Frontera the steamers *Vixen* and *McLane*, and the schooners *Bonita*, *Reefer*, *Nonita*, and *Forward*, and he carried two hundred marines, besides ample crews. Frontera was an important port, because the river that flows in the gulf there is the dividing line between the Yucatan peninsula and Mexico proper. Moreover, Tabasco was an important city lying some distance up the river. The Mexicans had a considerable fleet of merchant vessels in this river—two river steamers, in fact, besides five coasting schooners, a brig, a sloop, and a lot of small barges.

Captain Perry made a dash over the bar with the *Vixen* and two schooners, when he reached the mouth of the river. The Mexican fleet inside were taken almost unawares—there was, at any rate, no time to escape, and the fire of the land-batteries did no damage to the Americans. After the capture of the shipping the forts and town surrendered.

Captain Perry at once followed up his success by ascending the river with the *Vixen* and the captured steamer *Petrita*. A battery of four good twenty-fours, advantageously located at a bend in the river, was abandoned by the Mexicans, and at Tabasco, which lies seventy-

Matthew Calbraith Perry.
From an oil painting at the Naval Academy, Annapolis.

two miles up the river, only three shots were needed to bring down the enemy's flag.

The result of cutting the enemy's territory in two here, was that Yucatan was thereafter governed and her resources appropriated by the Americans until the war ended.

Of course the chief work in hand was the

Capture of Tabasco by Perry's Expedition.

From a lithograph designed and drawn on stone by Lieutenant H. Walke, U. S. N.

capture of Vera Cruz. On the night of November 20, 1846, Lieutenant Parker, two midshipmen, and five sailors, in a small boat from the brig *Somers*, entered Vera Cruz harbor and burned the bark *Creole* that was lying under the guns of the forts. This was a right valorous but a mistaken expedition, for it appears from the papers of Commodore Conner that not only did he know nothing of it until the flames of the ship were seen, but had he known of it he would have stopped it. The *Creole* was supposed to be a blockade runner loaded with arms, and that she had slipped in. As a matter of fact, Conner allowed her to go in, and she was the medium by which communications were carried on with spies and disaffected Mexicans who had kept Conner well posted as to the condition of affairs in Mexico, and as to the troops, guns, etc., in and around Vera Cruz. Indeed, it is said that among the more valuable services of Conner in this war was the gathering of exact information about the enemy.

Another mishap occurred when the *Somers*, while chasing a blockade runner on December 8th, carried sail so hard that she capsized and lost over forty men—half of her crew. She was commanded at the time by Commander Raphael Semmes, who gained fame in the Confederate cruiser *Alabama* in the Civil War.

But the worst feature of the work on the

coast was facing the tropical fevers. The men enjoyed meeting an enemy they could see, but there was no defence against the malarial germs from the swamps. The yellow fever appeared, as well as other less malignant fevers, and scurvy came in the list of terrors.

Nevertheless, the men remained at their posts uncomplainingly, and in March, 1847, the force before Vera Cruz numbered seventy ships and transports, with General Winfield Scott's army of 12,600 men on board.

Not a little controversy has grown out of the work that followed. A number of good authorities were of the opinion that Vera Cruz should have been captured by the ships alone, while the friends of Conner maintain that an attack by the fleet would have been fatal to it. The question at issue is as to the strength of the castle San Juan de Ulloa, lying on Gallega Reef, just off the city—a reef that really forms the harbor. The city lies on the mainland with a fort at each end, and a wall all around it. It is said, on one hand, that the castle was old and weak, and on the other that it had been strengthened as to the mason-work, and with new and heavy guns, the whole number of efficient guns being at least two hundred. Commodore Conner had a fleet of ten vessels, ranging from the fifty-gun frigate *Potomac* down to a twelve-gun brig—in all two hundred and one

Brig-of-War Like the *Somers* Under Full Sail.
From the "Kedge Anchor."

guns, "of which number not half were fitted either by weight or shape to make any serious impression on the walls of a fortress." The quotation is from a pamphlet on the subject by P. S. P. Conner, a son of the Commodore. Without trying to decide the matter it may be said that Farragut was of the opinion that the fort could have been taken.

However, no naval attack was made, but every preparation was made for a combined army and naval attack. Commodore Conner provided for landing a battery of six heavy guns from the ships, that were to be manned by seamen and sheltered by a sand-bag battery. At sunrise on March 9, 1847, Conner sent the steamers *Spitfire* and *Vixen* with four gunboats to clear the beach near the town. Meantime the troops embarked in huge row-boats, made for the purpose, and by ten o'clock over ten thousand men had been landed with arms and stores. On the next morning the *Spitfire* was sent in to draw the enemy's fire and disclose the location of the guns along the mainland. Every gun opened on her and she returned the fire, sending shells to the heart of the town, and then, the guns having been located, she retired.

The bombardment of the city by the land-batteries began on March 22d, and on the next day Lieutenant Josiah Tattnall, with the steam-

ers *Spitfire* and *Vixen* and five schooners in tow, attacked the castle. One schooner was left off Point Honorios, but the others steamed up until within grape range of Fort San Juan de Ulloa. The Mexicans held their fire in ominous fashion until the American vessels were in position and then opened with scores and hundreds of guns, from the city as well as the castle. The vessels were in an instant almost obscured by the spray that arose in clouds where the shot of the enemy struck the water on every side of them. A more terrific fire has rarely been seen. It covered the vessels with water as well as hid them with spray, and the sailors came out of the fight at the end of an hour soaking wet and in real danger of taking cold.

But not a man had been hit by a missile. Only three of the vessels were struck, and those not seriously. It was a very poor exhibition of gunnery.

In the meantime, between the 10th and the 20th, the sailors had established their battery on shore and had arranged to work it as it would have been worked on a ship. So eager were the forces afloat to see service in this battery that the officers for it were chosen by lot. So effective was its work that the enemy, on the 25th, concentrated upon it all the guns that would bear, and the work there became the warmest any man present had ever experienced.

Seeing this, Commodore Perry, who had relieved Conner on the 21st, ordered four vessels into the harbor to divert the attention of the enemy from the battery. Lieutenant Josiah Tattnall was fortunate enough to get command of this little squadron, and with it discretion to go where he pleased. Accordingly he advanced to within eighty yards of the castle and then went still farther in. The fire he drew on his boats was terrific—so terrific, in fact that Commodore Perry, to save the vessels, that seemed doomed to immediate destruction, signalled Tattnall to return; but Tattnall was too busy to look for signals and did not see them. So a small boat had to be sent to bring the intrepid crews away.

While the army must share some of the honor of the capture of Vera Cruz with the army, it is clear that between the ships and the naval battery ashore the seamen did the main part of the work. It was their battery that made the first and the largest breach in the forts attacked, and at two o'clock on the afternoon of the 25th, every gun in reach of this battery had been silenced. The battery lost four men killed and eight wounded.

Perhaps one of the most signal evidences of cool bravery shown by the sailors was when Santa Anna was landed from the American fleet. As the reader will remember, Santa

Naval Bombardment of Vera Cruz, March, 1847.

From a lithograph published in 1847 by N. Currier.

Anna had been President of Mexico earlier in the trouble with the United States, but a revolution had overthrown him. The American Government thought to make a new revolution in Mexico and at the same time get a man in power there who could be bought into making a peace, by aiding Santa Anna to return. Negotiations were opened with him at Havana and some kind of an arrangement made by which he went to the American fleet off Vera Cruz, and it was then proposed to land him with his suite under a flag of truce.

A more dangerous movement for that brave Mexican could not be imagined, for he was outlawed, and any soldier might kill him at sight.

But Lieutenant Josiah Tattnall went ashore with him, and on landing took his arm, and then the two, at the head of the general's suite, walked up the streets. The throng looked on in silence until a squad of soldiers recognized the old hero and saluted. At that everybody cheered, and Santa Anna was again, practically, master of Mexican affairs. And what was of more importance, he was a patriot first of all, and the Americans soon found they had made a mistake in sending him home.

A feature of the operations alongshore that deserves mention, if only to say a good word for a brave officer, was a third attack on Alvarado. The Mexicans had collected a lot of

horses there that Scott needed for the advance on the capital after Vera Cruz was taken. The steamer *Scourge*, under Lieutenant Charles G. Hunter, was sent to blockade the place, while a larger force was to follow to attack it. General Quitman was to get in behind and cut off retreat. Hunter arrived at the port on March 30th, and immediately captured the town with his one ship. Quitman had not yet arrived in the rear, of course, and the enemy got away with the horses. Because of Quitman's delay, Hunter had to suffer. He had, perhaps, exceeded his orders somewhat in capturing the place, but his gallantry in taking it single-handed where a squadron was thought necessary for the task, deserved a better fate than it received. He was court-martialled and dismissed from the service. One cannot help saying that a great wrong was done, not so much because one man suffered unjustly, but because no nation can afford to punish a man beyond a reprimand for an excess of bravery and zeal.

At 8 A. M. on March 25th, the firing at Vera Cruz ceased, at the request of the Mexicans, and after a talk between the commanding officers the town surrendered on March 28, 1847, and the important work of the navy for that war was done.

It was not a great war. For the American

The U. S. Naval Battery During the Bombardment of Vera Cruz on the 24th and 25th of March, 1847.
From a lithograph designed and drawn on stone by Lieutenant H. Walke, U. S. N.

The Battle of Vera Cruz.—Night Scene.

From an engraving by Thompson of a drawing by Billings.

nation it was not a creditable war. Nevertheless, the naval men, although lacking opportunity for engaging in the kind of battles for which they had been especially trained—although lacking opportunity to meet an enemy afloat—showed in their energy and persistent bravery that they would not lower the standard of efficiency set for them in the War of 1812.

CHAPTER XIX

EXPEDITION IN AID OF COMMERCE

COMMODORE MATTHEW C. PERRY AND THE FIRST AMERICAN TREATY WITH JAPAN—AN EXHIBITION OF POWER AND DIGNITY THAT WON THE RESPECT OF A NATION THAT HAD BEEN JUSTIFIED IN ITS CONTEMPT FOR CIVILIZED GREED—SERVICES OF NAVAL OFFICERS THAT ARE NOT WELL KNOWN AND HAVE NEVER BEEN FULLY APPRECIATED BY THE NATION.

ALTHOUGH any historian of the American Navy must be almost exclusively occupied with the deeds of men whose chief business it was to secure and promote the peace of the nation, one chapter of this work must be devoted to achievements which, though bloodless and in no sense spectacular, were of great importance not only to the American people but to the whole world.

A most interesting and valuable work might be written on the doings of the American Navy in times of peace. It would be especially valuable, for it would demonstrate beyond question that the Yankee seamen have at the least earned what they have cost during the years when

short-sighted legislators have argued that a navy was on the whole a useless expense, or at best a school of preparation for a war not likely to come.

The truth is that only one of the navy's achievements in times of peace has ever been fully appreciated by the American people, and that was the expedition to Japan, in the early fifties, under Captain Matthew Calbraith Perry. This Captain Perry, it is worth noting, was a younger brother of Oliver H. Perry, the hero of Lake Erie. He was made a lieutenant in 1813, but, like many others at that time, did not make a great name simply because he lacked opportunity. He never had a separate command where the qualities that give a naval officer fame might have sway. However, in the Gulf squadron during the war with Mexico, he found some work to do, and he had previously identified himself with the progressive work of the Navy by services in connection with the early use of steam, something of which will be told in the last volume of this work.

After the Mexican war, came the tremendous developments on the Pacific coast, and the wide expansion of commerce that gave the American clipper ship an imperishable fame—an expansion of commerce that reached out to every nation of the globe but one. That one was the rich island-empire of Japan. A most

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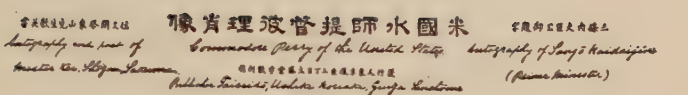


A Japanese Portrait of M. C. Perry, with a poem dedicated to him.

From a lithograph presented to the Navy Department by William Elliott Griffis, Esq.

TRANSLATION OF THE POEM

"When in the Land of the Morning, I came as Ambassador, aiming to reach the Eastern Capital, many days passed while the ships lay at anchor in a place called the harbor of Yokohama. One day, in order to beguile the tedium of waiting, we gathered on board and feasted. After sunset the moon rose resplendent, and, in playful mood, I sang this verse:

On Musashi's bright sea,
The rising moon,
In California
Makes setting gloom.

"Taira Hiraki [Sakuma Shozan] composed this, putting himself in the place of the American Envoy."

Translated by T. Harada and Wm. Elliot Griffis.

remarkable and a most interesting people were the Japanese. In the sixteenth century, a band of Christian missionaries penetrated the empire, and found there a civilization really far higher than that they had left in Europe. With wondrous zeal and self-sacrifice, and arrogant confidence in their own superiority, these missionaries set about converting this people to the Christian faith and subverting the government to their own ends. They succeeded in proselyting and in politics just far enough to throw the whole empire into a turmoil that ended at last in much bloodshed and the total expulsion of all the devotees of the Christian religion.

So painful had been the experience of the Japanese that they determined that thereafter no Christian should ever have a foothold in their country; and for nearly three hundred years they were very nearly faithful to this resolve.

The Dutch did, indeed, manage to establish something of a trading station at Nagasaki. The Dutch were from the early days adroit and enterprising traders, but the conditions to which they submitted were so humiliating that the Japanese held them in the heartiest contempt. In fact, the Japanese during the nineteenth century had come to believe that the Christian world had really no thought uncon-

nected with the greed of material gain; and when the clear-eyed historian looks over that world as a whole he cannot escape the feeling that the Japanese were almost justified in their faith. A people who worship Beauty and Art are justified in their contempt for those who worship the twin gods of Utility and Profit.

Nevertheless it is certain that with the introduction of Western civilization wrought by the American fleet the Japanese standards of Liberty and Justice have been immeasurably raised. And that is to say that the Japanese people have gained in happiness more than greedy Western traders have gained in material profits, while the result of spreading the knowledge of Japanese art over the rest of the civilized world needs nothing more than mere mention here. It is with good reason that the American people recall the work under Commodore Matthew Calbraith Perry with hearty pride.

It is a matter of interest to note that Perry was advocating an expedition to peacefully open the ports of Japan to American commerce, when so wise a statesman as Webster viewed the matter with indifference, for that was not the only occasion in the history of the country when the people might well have given a quick ear to the advice of naval officers in the matter of the nation's foreign policy. As

a matter of fact, the officers of the Navy, with their knowledge of the world and their sturdy patriotism, are the safest and in every way the best judges of what the foreign policy of the nation should be.

The advance upon Japan was slow. President Jackson sent a man to the East in 1831 with that project, among others, in view. In

The *Mississippi* in a Cyclone on Her Japan Cruise.
Fom a wood-cut in Perry's "Narrative" of this trip.

1845 Commodore Biddle was sent with the big ship-of-the-line *Columbus* and the *Vincennes* to negotiate a treaty, but he was hampered by orders "not to do anything to excite" either hostile feelings toward or distrust of the United States, and nothing was accomplished. Another expedition planned in 1851

The *Mississippi* at Jamestown, St. Helena.
From a lithograph in Perry's "Narrative."

failed even to reach the Japanese coast because the commander, Captain James Aulick, of the *Susquehanna*, was recalled, when *en route*, to face a charge based on a false report regarding his conduct as a gentleman and an officer.

Finally, on March 24, 1852, Commodore Perry having been appointed to the mission, he sailed from Norfolk in the steamer *Mississippi*, and after touching at the Madeiras, St. Helena, the Cape of Good Hope, and elsewhere *en route* he arrived at Hong Kong, on the southeast corner of China, on April 6, 1853. The American squadron on the China station included the steamer *Susquehanna* and the sailing-ships *Saratoga* and the *Plymouth*. These were added to the expedition, with the *Susquehanna* as flagship, and on July 8th the squadron was in the Bay of Yeddo and at anchor off Uraga.

As it happened, there was a fog on the sea that morning, and no steamship had ever entered the harbor before that day. This combination of circumstances — the sudden appearance of two big ships propelled out of the fog, with two others in tow, by a power they had never seen, made a profound impression on the people. Yet it was not the impression that an ignorant people would have received, for the authorities were expecting the fleet, having

heard of it through the Dutch, and they had read about and had seen pictures of steamships and steam-cars as well.

But while the fleet was well adapted to excite the respect as well as the admiration of the people, they still had but one idea of the white race, and that was that it was animated by greed only, and so would submit, as the Dutch had done, to every indignity to accomplish their ends. And it was the not unnatural pleasure of this curious people to inflict indignities on traders.

It was therefore with astonishment mixed with rapidly growing respect that they became acquainted with the envoy of the American nation. For it was a curious fact (curious to us) that this representative of a people who believe all men born free and equal was the first to insist on the Japanese recognizing distinctions in rank among Americans. The representative of a people who believe in observing no other forms than those that preserve the rights and comforts of the individual, and despise formalities exacted for form's sake, compelled the Japanese to the observance of the most respectful formalities in their intercourse with him.

As the squadron steamed up the bay, boat after boat bearing official flags put out from the shore, but they were wholly ignored by the Yankee commodore. And when the ships had

View of Uraga. Yeddo Bay.

From a lithograph in Perry's "Narrative."

come to anchor and the little officials from the shore came alongside, the lines of their boats were cut as fast as the crews tried to make fast to the war-ships, and the officials themselves, who were so bold as to try climbing on board, were driven back — in some cases knocked back — into their boats, while an interpreter informed them that only the very highest official would be admitted.

Then came one who was manifestly of no little importance, though not of the highest rank. By motions he let it be known that he wanted a gangway lowered. He was ignored until he showed an order for the ships to leave the harbor immediately, when the interpreter informed him that no communication could be held with such a low-grade fellow as he was. At that, somewhat humbled, he asked that someone of a rank corresponding to him might be delegated to receive him, and after a delay that was long enough to make him think no one cared very much for the matter, a lieutenant was assigned to listen to him and he was permitted to come on board.

On his reaching the deck of the flagship the Americans found they were dealing with the Vice-Governor of the district. He said the Japanese law provided for communicating with foreigners at Nagasaki only, where the Dutch came to trade. The American representative

A Japanese Junk.

From a lithograph in Perry's "Narrative."

(Lieutenant John Contee) informed him that the Americans considered any such proposition to be in the highest degree disrespectful. Further, they had come to Japan with a message from their President to the ruler of Japan, and that that message should be delivered only to a prince of the highest rank, who especially represented the Japanese ruler. Moreover, it would be delivered only on the shores of the bay where the squadron was now lying, and at a point very near the capital.

Then pointing to the armed boats that swarmed around the *Susquehanna*, Lieutenant Contee, in an indignant manner, informed the official that the presence of those boats was an insult, and that if the boats did not go away quickly the insult would be resented with violence—even with the cannon.

At that the official ordered the boats away, and the upshot of the visit was that the governor himself came next day on board to negotiate. He was received by two captains—Buchanan and Adams—with Lieutenant Contee, but he was informed that no third-rank official like himself could see the American commodore.

After some little palaver the governor conceded that the Americans might deliver their message there, but insisted that the answer of the Emperor must be sent to Nagasaki. Im-

mediately the watchful Americans noted, although they did not understand the language, that the governor used one term when he spoke of the Emperor and a different one when he spoke of the American President. Assuming that he was less respectful in speaking of the President, they demanded that he use the same term for each ruler, and he apologized. Then they told him that the answer to the message would be received only where the message was delivered.

Finding the Americans fully determined, the governor said he would have to appeal to the throne for instructions. This seemed reasonable, but when he said it would take four days to get his instructions back, although the capital was but a few hours away, the Americans said that if the Emperor did not not send the order in three days the ships would steam up to the capital to learn the cause of the delay, and in that event the American commodore would go ashore and himself call for the answer to the President's message to the Emperor.

"I will wait until Tuesday, the 12th day of July, and no longer," was the emphatic message which Commodore Perry sent to the governor, and that brought the governor to the American terms.

It may be worth noting here, as indicating

Commodore Perry's First Landing at Gorahama.
From a lithograph in Perry's "Narrative."

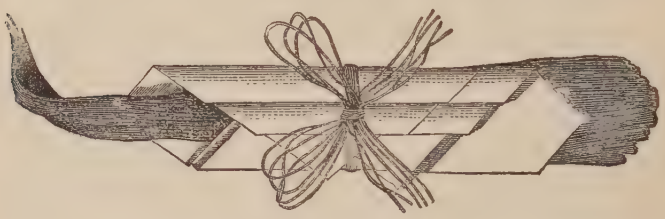
Commodore Perry Delivering the President's Letter to the Japanese Representatives.
From a lithograph in Perry's "Narrative."

the character of the Japanese, that when the Governor of Uraga came on board he was accompanied by three reporters, who not only wrote down everything that was said, but asked many questions, wrote the answers carefully, and added descriptions of everything they saw about the ships. Like good reporters everywhere, they were careful, in matters of importance, to get everything down in their notebooks, and then verify their notes. They are called *Metsko Devantigers—i. e.*, men who look in all directions.

On Tuesday, July 12th, came word permitting the message to be delivered in a house to be erected for the purpose on the shore of the bay and promising an answer in due time at the same place. An official of the highest rank was assigned to receive the message. The Thursday following was the day set for delivering the message. So Commodore Perry ordered out his barge with fourteen others to carry guards of honor. The boats formed in line and the advance guard-boat, with an American captain in command, was accompanied by two Japanese boats containing, as a mark of honor, the Governor and Vice-governor of Uraga. There was a band of music, and to the blare of brazen instruments was added the roar of a thirteen-gun salute.

On reaching the shore the American guard,

consisting of four hundred marines and sailors, lined up to salute the commodore. Then a procession was formed, with the commodore in a sedan-chair borne by Chinese members of the crew, while the letter of the President and the credentials of the commodore were borne by two negroes selected for their size and bearing. These documents, by the way, were written on vellum of folio size, the big seals were enclosed in solid gold boxes, and the documents were enclosed in gold-mounted caskets.



A Japanese Fish-Present.

(One of the invariable Imperial gifts. The substance protruding at each end is edible sea-weed on which the fish is laid and covered with paper.)

From a wood-cut in Perry's "Narrative."

The commodore's sedan was flanked by two immense negroes in gorgeous uniform and armed like pirates.

There was no great ceremony in the house of reception. The dignitaries took seats, a box that had been prepared for the occasion was pointed out as the receptacle of the message, and into it the message was placed. There was, of course, plenty of bowing and rising up in the presence of the great men of both

nations. But after the big ceremony was over the princes went on board ship and had a sail around the bay. There was also an exchange of presents, the Japanese being somewhat surprised to find the Americans refusing to accept presents without returning something of equal value.

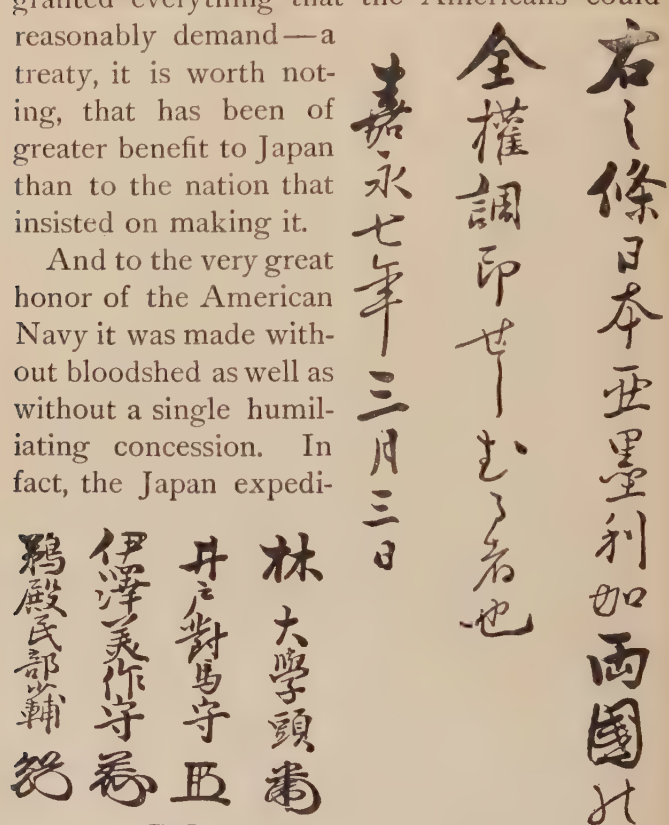
In February the commodore returned for the

The Imperial Barge at Yokohama.
From a wood-cut in Perry's "Narrative."

Emperor's reply to the President's message requiring a commercial treaty. He came with the steamers *Powhatan*, *Mississippi*, and *Susquehanna*, with the *Lexington*, *Vandalia*, and *Macedonian* in tow. They insisted on anchoring farther up the bay than before—at Yokohama, within nine miles of the capital. Here

the commodore continued the practices of the former visit, and the business of the expedition was concluded in the signing of a treaty which granted everything that the Americans could reasonably demand—a treaty, it is worth noting, that has been of greater benefit to Japan than to the nation that insisted on making it.

And to the very great honor of the American Navy it was made without bloodshed as well as without a single humiliating concession. In fact, the Japan expedi-



The Final Page of the First Treaty with Japan.
From a facsimile of the original.

tion emphasizes the assertion that whenever matters of foreign diplomacy have been left to the discretion of the officers of the Navy both

Commodore Perry Meeting the Imperial Commissioners at Yokohama.
From a lithograph in Perry's "Narrative."

Japanese Wrestlers at Yokohama.
From a lithograph in Perry's "Narrative."

the honor of the nation and justice have been carefully guarded.

An amusing feature of the history of this expedition is found in the periodicals of the day, where it is said that the Japanese idea of entertaining their guests was a "disgusting exhibition" of the skill of their wrestlers, while the American idea of a return entertainment was a "brilliant" negro minstrel show in which the seamen of the fleet performed as well as the professional talent at "Christy's" on Broadway might have done.

No elaborate résumé of the doings of the scientific explorers of the Navy can be given here. The exploring expedition of Lieutenant Charles Wilkes, with the sloops *Vincennes* and *Peacock*, the brig *Porpoise*, the store-ship *Relief*, and the tenders *Sea-gull* and *Flying Fish*, was the most pretentious. It was authorized in 1836, and was directed chiefly to the extreme South, but some work was done among the islands of the Pacific. A number of thick quarto volumes give the reports of officers and specialists, but only people engaged in a scientific study of nature ever fully appreciated the great value of the work done. Lieutenant J. M. Gilliss, assisted by Lieutenant Archibald MacRea, Acting-Master S. L. Phelps, and Captain's Clerk E. R. Smith, were members of a "United States Astronomical Expedition

to the Southern Hemisphere" in 1849–52. There was an exploring expedition in the Parana in the steamer *Water Witch*, which was fired on by the Paraguyan dictator, and the event compelled a show of force, later on, in

Commodore's Pennant, 1812—1860.
From a pennant at the Naval Institute, Annapolis.

order to teach the people there to respect the flag. An exploration of the Dead Sea was made by Lieutenant William Francis Lynch, in 1848. In 1850 Lieutenant Edwin J. De Haven sailed from New York with the brigs *Rescue* and *Advance*, in search of the remains

The U. S. Brig *Porpoise* in a Squall.

From a picture drawn and engraved by W. J. Bennett, in 1844.

The U. S. Frigate *Hudson* Returning from a Cruise, with a Fair Wind.
From a picture drawn and engraved by W. J. Bennett.

of Sir John Franklin, the Arctic explorer. A proper relation of what was accomplished by these and other expeditions of the kind would fill a large and most interesting work. But it may be said here that only a cursory examination of the reports of the officers making them is needed to show not only that the naval officers were fitted for the work in hand, but that the work accomplished was in its influence upon humanity in general, as well as upon the American nation, well worth its cost.

APPENDIX

NAVAL CALLS

From the Station Bills of the U. S. Ship *Concord* during her cruise in the Mediterranean, 1830 — 1832, Captain M. C. Perry, Commander.

From the original volume at the Naval Academy, Annapolis.

BUGLE CALLS

CALL FOR DRUMS & FIFES

BAND CALL

CALL

1st CUTTER

Lieutenant John Marshall

Midshipman James Aldin

Isaac Pierce Corswain	William Fulton
James Williams 1st	William Bryant
Charles Anderson	Adam G. Snow
John Hutchings	George W. Cook
John Sullivan	Joseph Trickman
Samuel Watkins	Oliver Cole
	Christopher Houself

CALL

ALLIGATOR

Lieutenant George Adams

Midshipman Wm. Williamson

Carlisle Scott Corswain Nicholas Wickham

Lieutenant Cowgill James Burns

Curtis Hutchins

CALL

SHARK

Lieutenant George Adams

Midshipman Dominick Lynch

Thomas Ingalls Corswain George Knaust

John Griggs John Beatman

James Williams 2d

CALL

LAUNCH

Lieutenant James T. Gerry

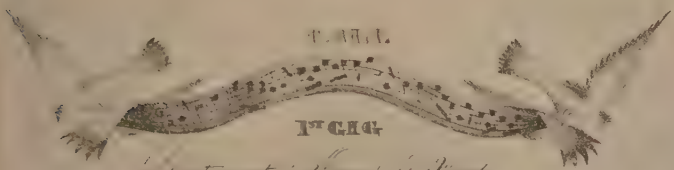
Midshipman Chas. C. Griffin

William Whale
Andrew Jackson
Aaron L. Darrow
Thomas Scott
Daniel Adams
Henry Campbell
Henry Jenkins
Arthur McCoy

Joseph Stansbury
John Little
Jonathan G. Bartell
John Brooks
Benjamin Baldwin
Edward Powers
William Smith 2d
Joseph Deimer

PARTS ORDWS

CALL



1st GIG

Lieutenant James H. Ward

Midshipman Oliver H. Perry

[illegible] Patterson Coxswain [illegible]

Henry Oakley [illegible] Hankins

Herbert Mack Isaac Cornell

CALL

ARIEL

Lieutenant James H. Ward

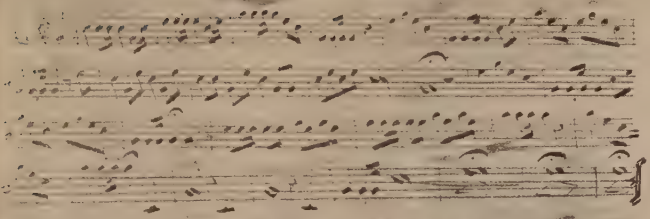
Midshipman John J. Almy

George Turney Coxswain Frederick Hemmlitz

John Derrick Stephen Williams

THE MORNING CALL
THE EVENING CALL

LAST CALL



CALL TO QUARTERS